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# THE INDEPENDENT

No 2,936

16 MARCH 1996

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Police to interview boys as evidence emerges of 20 obsessive years

## Hamilton's evil network

STEVE BOGGAN and JOHN MCKIE

Thomas Hamilton spent 20 years spreading a network of clubs for young boys across Scotland, playing a game of cat and mouse with officials who repeatedly tried to stop him.

As recently as last week, the 43-year-old loner gathered youngsters as young as eight for "football training" - which involved showing them his gun catalogue and offering them presents.

Councils across central Scotland had heard of Hamilton, his penchant for young boys, his weekends away at camp and the complaints he invariably attracted from parents. But every time they rooted him out, he moved on somewhere else.

Yesterday it emerged that since his sacking as a Scout leader in 1974, Hamilton had set up his unofficial "boys' clubs" in at least 14 areas, including Bannockburn, Dunfermline, Falkirk, Alva, Balfour, Stirling,



Twenty years in the shadow of a killer - page 3

Linlithgow, Bishopbriggs, Bonnybridge and Dunblane.

The most recent was established in Bishopbriggs, on the outskirts of Glasgow, a location he knew would take him outside the Central Regional Council area where he was best-known.

His last class there, at Thomas Muir High School, was held on Monday night. He had been there since October, but was already arousing suspicion.

Sam Galbraith, the MP for the area, only found out about the classes yesterday from his constituents. He said: "Hamilton was parading his gun catalogue on Monday night. If a boy did well, he would show them his gun catalogue. I understand he also used to take them swimming."

Hamilton allegedly also offered presents to boys in his class.

One father said: "He once told around 15 of them they

were going swimming and provided them with his own trunks, but he never took them swimming, they went to the gym."

"One evening, he drove a few boys to Stirling but when one asked to go to the toilet, he wouldn't let him into the house."

"These kids are traumatised. Most of the kids are sleeping with their parents, they don't want to sleep alone. They're not getting counselling - they should be."

Detectives are next week to visit primary schools in the area to quiz children on the "football" groups held by Hamilton and his associate, Iain Boal, a PE student.

The boys, aged between seven and twelve, were stripped to the waist for the exercise sessions at the secondary school. Hamilton, and Mr Boal, circulated leaflets at St Matthew's, Woodhill and St Helen's primary schools in Bishopbriggs.

On the leaflet, Hamilton called himself "Boys Sports Club Committee (President)". Mr Boal, who had gone to ground yesterday, called himself Club Football Coach, although the Scottish Football Association said he was not registered as a coach.

Numerous allegations were made about Hamilton's behaviour but no sexual misconduct was ever proven, despite inquiries by police covering the Falkirk, Alva, Linlithgow and Dunblane areas.

Central Regional Council tried to stop him leasing school halls for his clubs as early as 1984, after hearing about his ejection from the Scout Association. But its efforts were stymied when Hamilton appealed to the Ombudsman, the late Eric Gillett, who found in his favour, concluding that the allegations against him were "little more than gossip".

His MP, Michael Forsyth, now Scottish Secretary, sent a letter to Hamilton, saying: "Dear Mr Hamilton, thank you for sending me the commissioner's report. May I congratulate you on your success. I hope you will take steps to ensure this is given proper publicity."

He continued to run boys' clubs but his reputation always followed him. In 1989 he was run out of Linlithgow and in 1992 Dunfermline following complaints from parents. He took out a private lease on a school hall at Linlithgow Academy, but Lothian Regional Council refused to renew it.

"After he set up the boys' club, some parents expressed concerns about the general atmosphere he created."

TURN TO PAGE 2



John and Norma Major, and Tony Blair add their wreaths to the thousands of floral tributes at Dunblane Primary School yesterday Photograph: PA

## Blair and Major unite in grief

JAMES CUSICK and PETER VICKOR

The nation will unite tomorrow in silent grief and sympathy for the victims of the Dunblane massacre.

Suggestions that there should be a minute's silence on Mothers' Day to commemorate the dead were met immediately by an enormous groundswell of public support and unqualified backing from John Major.

The Prime Minister and the Labour leader, Tony Blair, buried party differences yesterday to represent the nation when they visited Stirling Royal Infirmary, one of the hospitals that dealt with the aftermath of the carnage.

Visibly shaken, the two politicians offered their thanks to the medical teams who treated

Hamilton's victims, and visited the child survivors of class primary one.

For many staff the visit was highly emotional: many burst into tears. Some hugged each other as they wept. The two politicians, wearing black ties, battled to retain their composure, and at one point Mr Blair seemed overcome.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by his wife, Norma, and the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth. Their arrival, together with Mr Blair and George Robertson, shadow Scottish Secretary, in one of the hospital's large conference rooms triggered an outpouring of emotion. Around 50 of the doctors, nurses, paramedics and ambulance teams that had been on duty on Wednesday met again for the

first time since the massacre and for many the occasion proved too much: many broke into tears and audible sobs.

After the visit, the Prime Minister told reporters of his admiration for the hospital staff.

"Over the last few days, this com-

munity and this hospital have had to deal with a horror of almost unimaginable proportions. They have had to face an horrific job and have done it with immense skill and dedication."

The Labour leader echoed Mr Major's sentiments, praising hospital staff and the police for their dedication to duty. "It has been a quite remarkable coming together and I hope in some small way our both coming here in unity together will symbolise the unity of the country and that of the people of the world who have sympathy and respect for the people of Dunblane."

The leaders spent almost an hour and a half with the children, their families and hospital staff before leaving to visit the scene of the massacre itself at Dunblane Primary School. Mr Major announced immedi-

ately that the scene of the massacre should be demolished.

The Queen also paid tribute to the people of Dunblane in a speech yesterday. Buckingham Palace announced that she had decided to bring forward to tomorrow her visit to the town, after hearing that some families will be holding funerals on Monday.

The Pope yesterday condemned the massacre as senseless violence and said he was "profoundly saddened" by the killings. A telegram to Bishop Vincent Logan of Dunkeld said: "The Holy Father offers fervent prayers for the families and friends of the victims and for all mourning their loss. He invokes God's consolations upon all those suffering as a result of this senseless violence and he sends this blessing."

### Inside

- Gun control debate - page 2
- Killer's sordid travels - page 3
- Leading article - page 20
- Letters - page 20
- Bishop of Edinburgh - page 21



## Round one to Murdoch as 500,000 pay to see Bruno

MATTHEW HORSMAN Media Editor

More than 500,000 British households have agreed to spend £9.95 each to watch Frank Bruno battle challenger Mike Tyson for the world heavyweight boxing championship, to be broadcast this weekend on a pay-per-view basis only.

That translates into revenues nearly £5m, the bulk of which will go to BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite service, and the

holder of exclusive broadcast rights to the fight. As many as 2 million Britons are expected to watch the fight at home or with friends in what will be the country's first experience with pay-per-view television.

The revenue figures do not include sales to clubs, cinemas and pubs, which pay a higher rate. Many of these have been unable to extend their licences to serve alcohol at the 4am fight time. Although Tyson is the clear favourite, about 95

per cent of punters in Britain are backing Bruno, quoted at 3-1 by bookmakers. Tyson, who has fought only twice against mediocre competition since serving a prison sentence for rape, is quoted at 1-5.

Cable operators who are taking a transmission feed from BSkyB to deliver the fight to their customers also stand to earn revenues. Only Videotron has refused to offer the event, citing "technical" issues.

Additional sales could be

rung up today, when the price rises to £14.95. On the basis of sales to date, 10 per cent of all cable and satellite homes in Britain have taken up the pay-per-view offer. A takeup rate of 8 per cent for such programmes is considered a success in the US, where pay-per-view is well established.

BSkyB's decision to broadcast the fight on PPV was harshly criticised by many in the media, who argued that subscribers already pay hefty sub-

scription fees and should not be asked to pay more. Many predicted the experiment would fail.

A rival broadcaster said: "This is clearly a fantastic level of response, despite all the bad publicity surrounding Sky's decision to charge extra for the fight. But if they can't do it with the biggest fight in decades, then nothing would have worked."

BSkyB declined to comment on the sales. "We are pleased

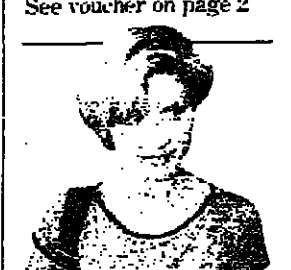
with the response," a spokeswoman said.

The controversial decision to air the fight on a pay-per-view basis is being watched closely by other broadcasters, including the ITV companies, and by advertisers, who have been concerned that PPV and other forms of subscription television could threaten advertising on commercial television. Sky has said it will show the without commercial interruption.

Ken Jones, page 32

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The making of Julia Carling The Saturday Story page 19

Peter Brook The greatest director we haven't got

The Lost Boys Why men refuse to grow up

Paris or bust How to enjoy the city on a budget

### MAGAZINE

My father, the Hollywood star Jamie Lee Curtis interviews Tony Curtis

### IN BRIEF

**Lawyer guilty of attack** A solicitor must pay a client's wife £1,000 after he was found guilty of assaulting her and imprisoning her in his office near Harrods. Page 6

**Israel to lift blockade** Israel is to lift the blockade of West Bank towns and villages which it imposed after the last suicide bomb in Tel Aviv. It was the most severe curfew imposed on the West Bank since the Gulf war. Page 11

**Today's weather** Sunshine, some showers and light winds. Page 2



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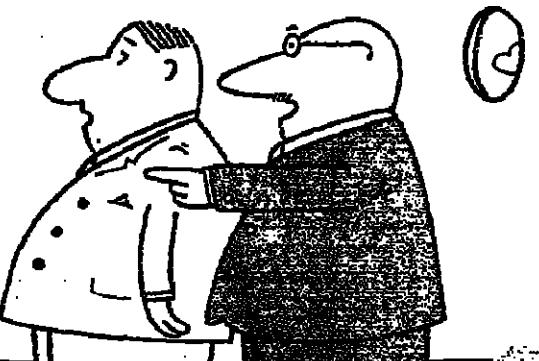
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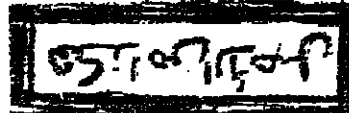


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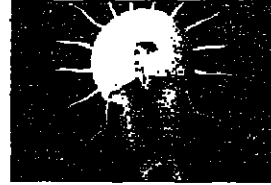
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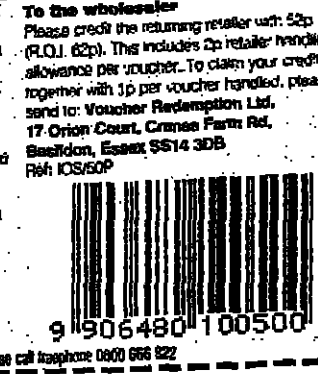
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## Orient Express firm to run East Coast line

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
Transport Correspondent

The company which operates the Orient Express is to be given the franchise to run Britain's most modern railway, the East Coast main line.

Sea Containers, which also operates Hoverspeed and Seacat, has become the sole preferred bidder to win the franchise for the InterCity East Coast services out of King's Cross, which was refurbished at a cost of nearly £1bn in the late 1980s. Final negotiations are taking place and the line could be handed over in the late spring.

Sea Containers will receive substantial subsidy to run the line, similar to the £47.9m BR received this year. Over 11 million passengers used the line last year and the company hopes to increase its £280m revenue by around 5 per cent per year.

The Bermuda-based company runs a number of other

tourist trains in addition to the weekly Orient Express including British Pullman, which runs tourist specials to places like Canterbury and Cambridge.

James B. Sherwood, its American president, is an outspoken character who is a patron of the Venetian arts. The company acquired the BR owned ferry operation Sealink when it was privatised in the 1980s but soon sold it and owns a number of hotels across the world, as well as extensive container operations.

Sea Containers is a surprise choice to run the line because it has consistently criticised the structure of the rail privatisation scheme and was embroiled in a fierce battle with the Government over its failure to win the franchise for South West Trains.

The company has always argued that it should be able to control the railway infrastructure, which is being sold to Railtrack, because so many delays

and problems are a result of signalling and track failures. It has beaten off bids from two bus companies, Stagecoach and National Express, and the management buy-out team.

It is thought Sea Containers had sought a 12 year franchise but was only granted the standard seven year term. There are no plans for new trains because the rolling stock is only a few years old. A scheme to introduce tilting trains, which could cut up to 30 minutes off the four and a quarter hour journey to Edinburgh, has been rejected by the company.

Brian Wilson, Labour's transport spokesman, called the decision a "public scandal" because of Sea Containers' handling of Sealink which it bought and then quickly sold on. He said: "This is the British Rail line which has benefited most from public investment. Now it is being handed over to a company whose record with public assets leaves a lot to be desired."



Show-stopper: Galliano's billowing tarts for his Autumn/Winter '96 collection launched amid a stampede of horses at the Polo Club in Paris. Photograph: Sheridan Morley

## Belgravia solicitor guilty of assault

A solicitor was ordered to pay a wealthy client's wife £1,000 compensation yesterday after he was found guilty of assaulting her and imprisoning her.

Allen Chubb, 52, who could now end up being struck off after 27 years in the legal profession, showed no reaction to the 10-2 majority decision at Inner London Crown Court.

The lawyer, who was privately prosecuted by his 32-year-old victim, Laura Harold, was found guilty of assault after a row over a disputed bill last April at the law firm's office in Belgravia, central London.

He was also found guilty of falsely imprisoning Mrs Harold, who was dragged across the office floor on her bottom, thrown down a flight of stone steps, and later rugby-tackled when she went back into the building to retrieve her coat.

Passing sentence, Judge Rodrick Adams told Chubb, a former special constable and charity fundraiser: "I recognise these convictions might well have serious repercussions on your professional life."

"The jury have found by their verdict that you used too much force in removing Mrs Harold and, by their verdict on the first count, that you improperly restrained her."

Chubb was also ordered to pay £1,000 costs. Mrs Harold was not in court, having left for a holiday in Italy.

The five-day trial was told the "tragic" confrontation arose after Mrs Harold called at the solicitor's office to get the deeds to her £1m home in Belgravia. Chubb refused to hand them over until her husband had settled an unpaid bill of £3,500.

## IN BRIEF

## Missing ferry skipper inquiry

Shipping giant P&O yesterday launched an investigation after the captain of a freight ferry went missing in the icy North Sea. John Carroll, 51, a father-of-six from Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, is thought to have gone overboard late on Thursday as the *European Highway* was sailing from Rotterdam in the Netherlands to Felixstowe, Suffolk. There are believed to be no suspicious circumstances.

## On your Marks

Marks & Spencer is to open its first franchised store in the Czech Republic later this year. Based in the capital Prague, it will sell family clothing, gifts and toiletries. New stores have opened in Cyprus, Turkey, Hungary and Thailand in the past year.

## Singer's debts deal

Entertainer Joe Longthorne has struck a deal with creditors to pay off his £1.6m debts. The singer, 40, stayed off bankruptcy by agreeing to pay £375,000 over five years, and half of anything above his likely earnings of £276,000 a year.

## 'Illness' hotel shuts

A seaside hotel is being closed for a week after nearly 150 people staying there were taken ill. The outbreak, caused by an airborne virus, was the latest in a series to affect guests at the Metropole on Blackpool's seafront.

## Porsche winner

The winner of the Independent Porsche Booster competition was Christopher Sweeting, of Cardiff, South Glamorgan.

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## Death blamed on 'GBH' drug

A 21-year-old woman is believed to be the first person in Britain to have died from taking a new designer drug known as GBH it emerged yesterday, writes Jason Bennett.

The drug, gamma hydroxy butyrate, heightens sexual awareness and is becoming popular on the dance scene. The Department of Health is investigating several companies for making the drug, which is illegal to produce but not to use or possess. It was banned in the US after it was blamed for causing comas and seizures.

An inquest on Wednesday heard that Abby Reading, 21, a bar worker, took the drug with a small amount of alcohol at a friend's house in Stourbridge, West Midlands. She was found collapsed the next day.

The inquest at Dudley, West Midlands, was told she died of heart and respiratory failure.

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The inquest at Dudley, West Midlands, was told she died of heart and respiratory failure.

## JOB WITH B.M.W.

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There weren't many perks for those who lived in the Bury St. Edmunds monastery in the 13th century.

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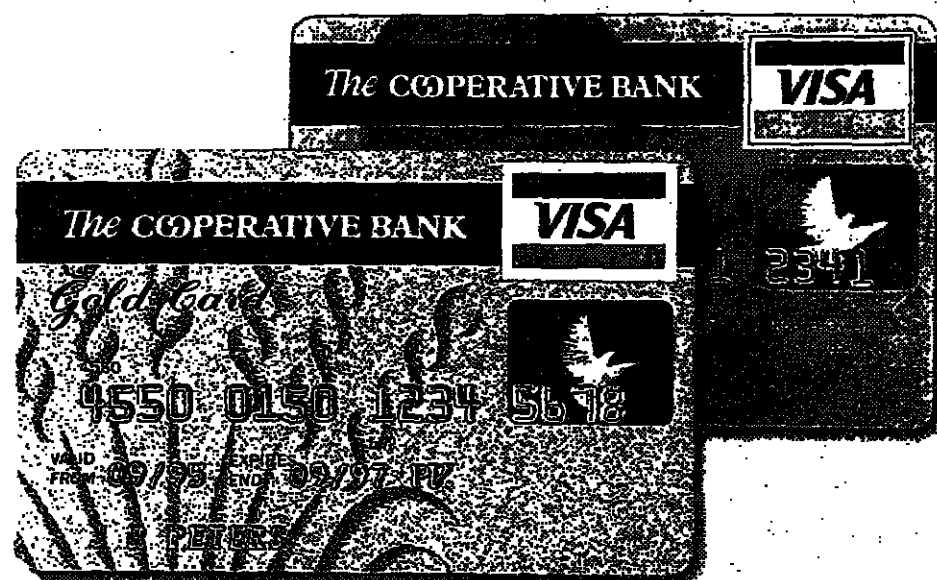
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Watchdog report: Calls for stiffer laws on labelling

# Green product claims 'mislead consumers'

GLENDA COOPER

"Green" claims on many UK products are misleading, meaningless or even downright dishonest, a consumer watchdog warned yesterday.

The confusion over environmental benefits of household products is so rife that the National Consumer Council fears that many people may give up trying to buy green altogether.

The report, *Green Claims*, published to coincide with World Consumer Rights day, says that existing legislation fails "to tackle misleading claims on products".

Many claims made by manufacturers were woolly and vague. This included toilet roll which claimed to be "softer on the environment" and stationery made with "environmentally conscious paper".

Others were meaningless,

such as "biodegradable" washing powders (all United Kingdom detergents exceed European Union standards on biodegradability anyway) or they disguised environmental hazards such as CFC-free products whose replacement product is just as dangerous.

The organisation also derided "recyclable" claims because in theory "almost anything is", and in practice very few local councils have the facilities to recycle. "Unless the consumer takes them to a special collection centre, the claim will be meaningless," the report said.

Logos - popular ones included globes, caring hands, streams and mountains - are also misleading shoppers who find it impossible to distinguish between official marks of approval and manufacturers' marketing tools. This simply increased shoppers' scepticism

and confusion, the report said. Environmental claims in advertising have been fairly well-regulated. But existing laws fail to tackle misleading claims on products and packaging. Prosecutions are taken up through the Trade Descriptions Act of 1968 by officers who have to prove the claim is false. To date there have only been four successful prosecutions.

"The situation is a real mess," said David Hatch, chairman of the NCC. "It's as much about what the label doesn't say as about what it does. As Robert Louis Stevenson said 'the cruelest lies are often told in silence'."

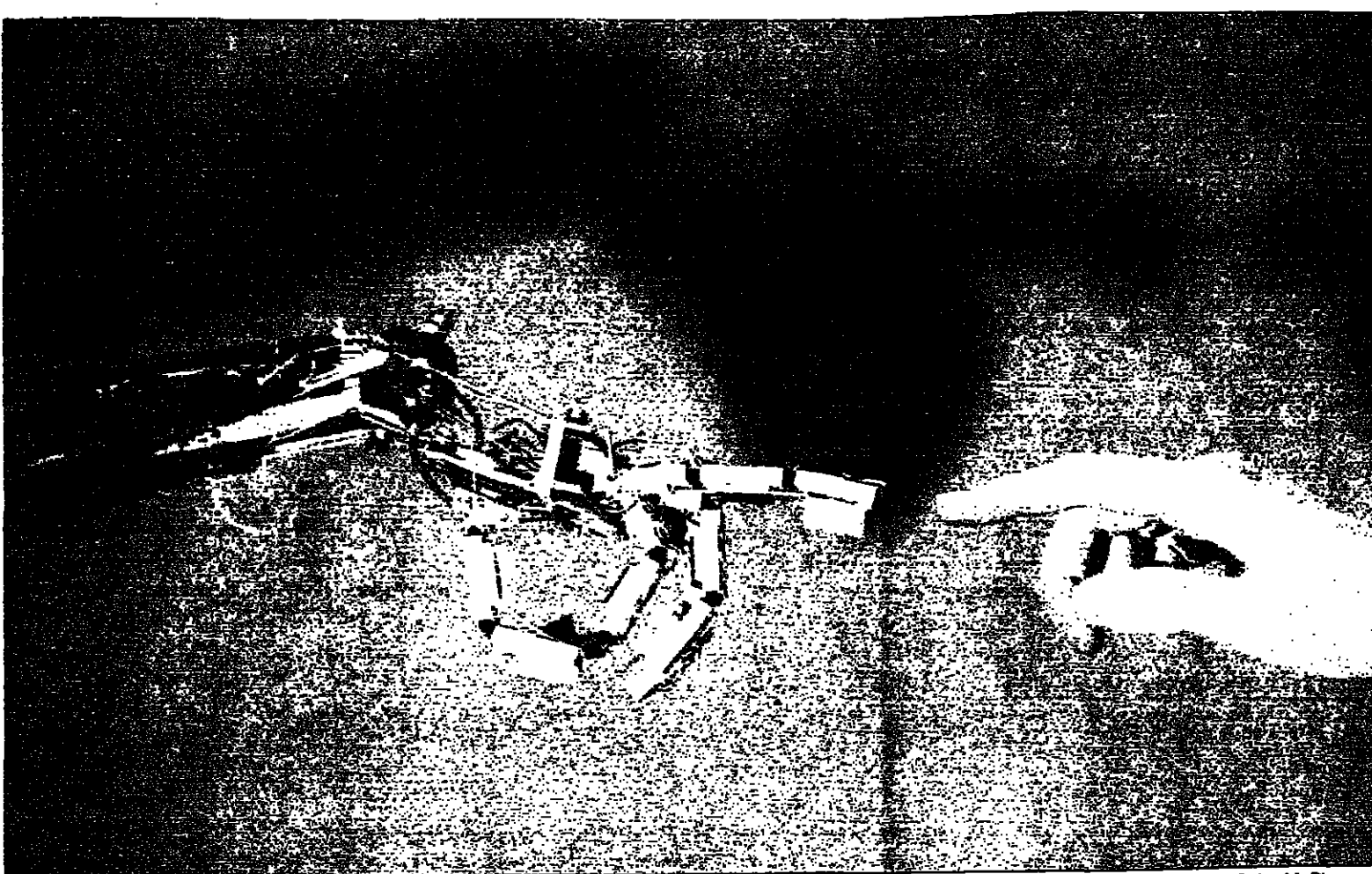
The NCC is calling for the introduction of a new code of practice backed by a reformed Act and a co-ordinated consumer education campaign.

It also supported the EU "ecolabel" which identifies products less harmful to the environment, and the energy label, which provides information on energy efficiency.

But Mr Hatch warned: "They are being crowded out and devalued by other labels displaying meaningless, cunning and deceptive symbols with weasel words and spurious claims."

The Environment Minister James Clappison said that the Act was still a safeguard against demonstrably false claims. "However, the NCC report suggests that the Act is of limited effect in dealing with 'on-products' claims. . . . The Government prefers to make progress here by stimulating the market to work better, rather than by adding to regulation."

The supermarket chain Tesco said it welcomed the report and backed the proposal to regulate claims. And Keith Chesterton, director-general of the Soap and Detergent Industry Association, insisted the introduction of compact detergents, which cut down on transport and packaging costs, showed that there was concern in the industry.



Hands-on science: Robotic arm built by the Shadow Group of London on show at the Robotix '96 show yesterday

Photographs: Colin McPherson

## Minesweeping robots apply to the US Army

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Science Correspondent

"I'm not aiming to populate the world with machines that will replace us, but with ones that will go where we don't want to," Mark Tilden said yesterday, as he watched one of his robot creations flop its way methodically across a table.

Despite his Indiana Jones hat, Mr Tilden is very serious: he is presently negotiating a contract which could mean that by the end of the year, some of his robots will have a job sweeping a United States Army testing range for unexploded munitions.

In years to come they could clear minefields in countries such as Vietnam, Korea, the Gulf states and any of 60 others where buried mines still pose a hazard to citizens.

"The object isn't just to make machines that will find the mines, but to make them cheap, and be able to blow them up

without human control," he observed, as he showed off the "snakebot" - a four-sectioned, battery-powered robot about 2ft long, which propels itself along the ground sideways, by rotating its sections.

He plans to build a 7ft one: that would be ideal for finding mines as its weight would set them off. He is also devising a "walking machine" 5ft high, to perform the same function.

Mr Tilden, a biophysicist from the Los Alamos research laboratories in New Mexico, builds robots which diverge from the conventional concept of a shuffling humanoid with diodes for eyes and a grating voice.

Instead, he uses the minimum of parts (at most 24 transistors - "fewer than a radio") and gives them simple aims, such as to seek out bright light to power their solar cells. But once they can do that, he can give them more complex aims. More interestingly, he says, once you ex-

ceeded about eight transistors, the machine's exact behaviour is unpredictable, though its goals remain the same.

If anyone says that his insect-like machines look ugly, he responds: "You can't have a minesweeping robot that looks cute. People will get attached to it, and then they won't send it out to do its job."

Mr Tilden was showing off some of his collection yesterday in Glasgow, at the Robotix '96 show in Barony Hall, Rottenrow. But while they might excel at finding mines, his devices are unlikely to compete in the events today in the "Robot Olympics", which include robots competing at javelin throwing, sumo wrestling, wall-climbing, rugby and sprinting.

Human athletes can probably rest on their laurels a little while longer, though. The present British robot javelin record is 2m - about 50 times less than the human one.



Mr Tilden's solar-powered butterfly, prototype of a spacecraft

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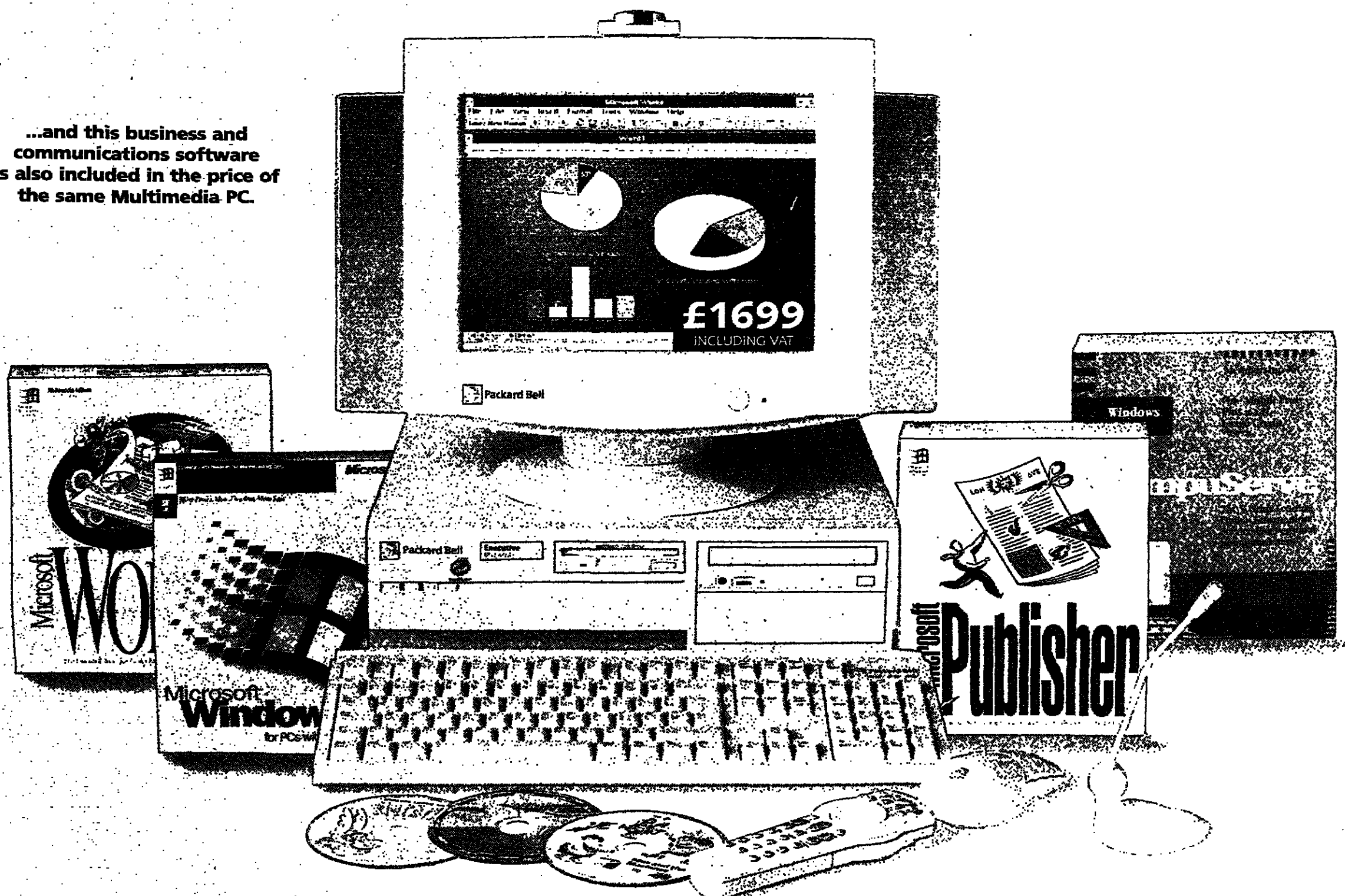






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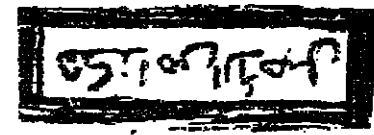
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## Supplier to Iraq is let off £1½m tax bill

CHRIS BLACKHURST  
Westminster Correspondent

A businessman named in the Scott report for exporting explosive equipment to Iraq who ran up debts of almost £1m because Saddam Hussein refused to pay him, when the Gulf war broke out, has had an unpaid tax bill of more than £500,000 set aside by the Inland Revenue and is applying for government grants to fund his latest £4m venture.

Mel Blackburn, who ran Global Technical & Management Services, a Scottish company which supplied Iraq with hi-tech equipment for clearing anti-personnel mines, is appealing to his creditors not to make him personally bankrupt. If they push him under, he argues, he will be unable to remain the driving force behind Tristram, a project to build ocean-going yachts to take deprived children from Liverpool on sailing trips.

Tristram is a charity but there is a bonus for Mr Blackburn if it takes off: it has contracted to buy the yachts from his boat-building company and the order should generate enough cash for him to pay off some of his Iraqi debts.

The IR has agreed to waive £574,000 of his admitted total tax liability of £659,000 and has allowed him to repay £85,000 over two years. He will plead with the other creditors, who are owed £265,000, next Wednesday, at a meeting in the Travellers Rest Hotel in Warrington, Cheshire. A copy of his letter to them has been sent to the Independent.

In it, Mr Blackburn admits that Global Technical Management Services was forced to cease trading as a result of the Gulf war. At that stage it was owed £5m by Iraq for "engineering services", described in the Scott report as a contract to clear Iraqi waterways of mines and train Iraqis in removing mines.

Part of the contract, said Scott, included the supply of explosive detonator transponders, which required an export licence. No application for a licence was made and, said Scott, it should have been.

In his personal statement to creditors, Mr Blackburn says the "cash thrust" of the company's business was in Iraq. At the outbreak of the Gulf war all contracts were suspended, the company stopped trading, all staff were laid-off and Global lay dormant.

For the first two years he lived off his savings and has since been receiving income support and picking up occasional consultancy work to get by. There is little chance, writes Mr Blackburn, of getting paid by Iraq.

He writes: "Following the Gulf war my financial affairs were investigated by the Inland Revenue and HM Customs & Excise particularly since I had failed to disclose income from abroad which had been paid into offshore bank accounts and VAT had been claimed on exports which HM Customs & Excise considered to be 'outside the scope'."

Since 1991, says Mr Blackburn, he has been co-operating with the IR "and I agreed a final tax liability of £659,000". The IR, he says, was willing to accept £2.5p in the £ or £85,000 to be paid over two years.

He also owes £170,671 to Forward Trust Limited, the finance company which is now petitioning for his bankruptcy. In all, nine businesses and individuals are listed as creditors.

Tristram Sailing, his private company, has contracted to sell to Tristram Trust, the charity, six yachts worth £4m, leaving Tristram Sailing with enough cash, he says, for him to pay all his creditors 12.5p in the £. But for that to happen, he says, it is vital that he is not made bankrupt and is allowed to remain in charge.

Both the company and the trust, he writes, are receiving government cash from the Department of Trade and Industry and the Single Regeneration Budget.

"The company and the trust are formed as a result of my concept and it is vital that I retain full managerial responsibility and control ... for them to succeed."

The DTI's Liverpool office confirmed that Tristram had applied for funding. "They have applied for a regional grant," an official said.



Gibson: Begging creditors to spare him bankruptcy

removing mines.

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Arms and the Ma'am: The opening of the new £42.5m Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds yesterday

## Queen defends museum's move

A fiercely fought battle between north and south ended yesterday as the Queen celebrated the relocation of Britain's oldest museum, housed for centuries in the White Tower at the Tower of London, to its new, hi-tech, £42.5m home in Leeds, writes Clare Garner.

Despite the scheme being denounced by critics as "little more than a theme park", the Queen endorsed the new Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds as an appropriate place to display the national collection of arms and armour.

Speaking at the official opening, she urged people not to forget the horrors of war, adding: "Those horrors have given rise to great deeds, great poetry, great music and great art. The weapons of war, which can be as beautiful as they are terrible, are often of the very finest design and craftsmanship."

## Unions warn Labour over pay policy

BARRIE CLEMENT  
Labour Editor

Unions have warned Labour that a Blair government could face damaging outbreaks of industrial unrest unless the party begins to thrash out a detailed policy on public-service pay.

The stark warnings have been delivered in a series of private meetings in which senior Labour figures have been told that considerable expectations about the relative generosity of a Labour government may be building up among some state employees.

However, Gordon Brown's Treasury team have told union officials that they can expect a continuation of the present government's policy of maintaining wage bills at their current levels. Employees' representatives have been told that pay rises must be funded by improvements in efficiency, which unions equate with job losses.

Any extra money would be devoted to the creation of new jobs specifically aimed at improving services.

In a meeting last week of the Public Policy Forum, which involves most of the Trades Union Congress's affiliates, unions warned that there would be "catch-up pressures of varying degrees of intensity among public-sector workers". While the TUC itself has no formal links with Labour, the warning is clearly aimed at the party leadership.

Unions have become increasingly frustrated with what

they see as Labour's "policy vacuum" over public services. Senior union officials have given their opinions explicitly in face-to-face meetings with Mr Blair. The Shadow Cabinet, however, has shown little indication to fill the void, according to union sources.

The forum is attempting to evolve a united position on the public sector which it will urge on the Labour leadership.

While union warnings on pay smack of "old Labour", the biggest unions are nevertheless showing signs that they have taken on board some of the new thinking.

The forum meeting last Tuesday agreed that a future government would have to ensure high quality public services. An internal TUC paper prepared for the meeting concedes that "the 'consumerist' pressures will be greater". It also accepts the inevitability of continuing stringency over public-sector financing.

Following consultation with unions, the TUC conceded that there was little support for a public-sector pay commission under Labour. Both the TUC and a Fabian Society pamphlet had floated the idea.

In a paper submitted to the forum, Unison, the largest public-sector union, said that instead of such a commission, unions should concentrate on the low-pay commission promised by Labour which would advise the government on the level of a statutory minimum wage.



Norwell Roberts: 'I think I have earned people's respect'

## Queen's medal for first black policeman

London's first black policeman, Norwell Roberts, yesterday received the Queen's Police Medal, and was congratulated by the Prince of Wales for his dedication in staying nearly 30 years in the job.

Detective Sergeant Roberts, as he now is, said afterwards: "The Prince told me 'we need more people like you'."

"He is right, because we do need more black policemen to make the police more representative of the community."

His original appointment in 1967 created widespread interest but he said it took years for him to be accepted by his colleagues.

"I wanted to do it," he said. "I had something I wanted to prove to myself."

"I am still proving it, but I think I have earned people's respect. I think it has all been worthwhile."

Det Sgt Roberts, 50, based at Golders Green in north-west London, came to Britain from the Leeward Islands when he was nine years old.

He said he planned to retire next year.

"I intend to write a book about my experiences," he added. "It will be humorous, but there will be a bit of straight talking."

Latest figures show that the Metropolitan Police has 790 officers from minority ethnic groups - representing 2.8 per cent of its 27,700-member force.

In the rest of England and Wales, non-white officers make up 1.7 per cent.

In Scotland, the figure is 0.2 per cent.

Recent research has suggested it would take at least 20 years for the police to reflect the ethnic mix of the United Kingdom's population.

## Dismay at EU proposal for art sale levy

ROS WYNNE-JONES

London's auction houses have reacted with dismay to news that the European Commission has finalised proposals for a levy on the sale of contemporary artwork to be applied throughout the EU.

The adoption of the proposal, which is likely to be put forward at the Council of Ministers' next meeting, would mean contemporary European painters, sculptors and photographers were entitled to between two and four per cent of the sale price every time their artwork was resold, for up to 70 years after their death.

Artists are currently entitled to resale rights, referred to in the art world as "droits de suite", in most European countries. In the UK, Ireland, Austria and the Netherlands, however, artists receive nothing when their work changes hands.

Christie's, the auctioneers, said the scheme amounted to little more than a "social security levy" for artists. Anthony Browne, a director, said: "If we believe that artists are a very important species, which I doubt, then maybe we should find a special way to look after them. But this is not the way."

Mr Browne believes the levy will drive the contemporary art market out of Europe to the auctioneers of New York, where no such tax exists. "If the Commission wants New York to take over from Paris and London as the centre of contemporary art, this legislation is the way to do it," he said.

Mr Browne said the Commission's claim that the levy was effectively a copyright fee was "a distortion of the facts". He said: "We already have a system of copyright in this country so that artists' works can't be produced. This is entirely different."

A spokeswoman for the European Commission said that large auction houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's would have nothing to worry about, because the higher the price of the artwork, the lower the percentage of the levy. Paintings worth less than £1000 (£824) would have no levy applied at all, while artwork costing more than £250,000 (£210,000) would be covered by a 2 per cent levy. Levies of 3 and 4 per cent would be paid on artwork costing between £1000 and £250,000.

Rachel Duffield, chief executive of the Design and Artists Copyright Society (DACS) welcomed yesterday's decision at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. "Fine artists are different to other creators, such as musicians, because they sell their work often for a very low price and then, later, huge amounts of money are made for everybody but the artist."

DACS said that Sotheby's had added 5 per cent to their buyers' commission in 1992 and claimed the auction house was being hypocritical by opposing a levy that benefited artists.

The National Artists Association said it supported a move towards resale rights, although some artists shared the auction houses' concern that the new legislation might drive the contemporary art market out of Europe.

A spokesman for the Department of Trade and Industry said the Government could see no benefit in introducing the levy.

## Tube fares cut by bulk-buy tickets

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
Transport Correspondent

Continental-style "carnets" are being made available on the London Underground for the first time, enabling people to buy bulk-buy tickets in advance.

Passengers buying the carnet will receive a 10 per cent discount, getting 10 tickets valid for £10 travel in the central zone for £10 rather than £11.00 each.

The carnets are aimed at visitors to the capital and at regular users of central zone tickets. London Underground hopes the carnets will save 15 to 20 million ticket transactions each year, reducing congestion at central stations. People using the tickets, which are valid for a year, will have to validate them at an automatic gate or special machine when entering the Tube system.

London Transport hopes to extend the system to outer zones but cannot do so until automatic gates are installed at all stations.

It is also launching two other types of tickets, which will be available this month. Family Travelcards will be available for one or two adults accompanying up to eight children and will give a 20 per cent discount off the cost of individual one-day travelcards.

Weekend Travelcards, valid for Saturday and Sunday at a discount of 25 per cent, will be on sale from 30 March. They are particularly targeted at weekend visitors to the capital and young people.

Tests are being carried out with "smart cards" which would replace existing tickets and enable LT to offer a much greater variety of fares and discounts.

## Record damages for teacher hurt by child

A primary school teacher has received record compensation from her local education authority after being assaulted by a 10-year-old boy.

Hazel Spence-Young, who taught at the Frederick Bird Junior School in Coventry, received £82,500 for neck injuries which, six years later, require her to wear a surgical collar.

The out-of-court settlement was believed to be the largest sum paid for injuries to a teacher in a mainstream school.

Many teachers who have also suffered serious injury at the hands of violent pupils may now follow her lead and sue their education authority.

The National Association of School Masters/Union of Women Teachers is expected to use the case of Mrs Spence-Young, 48, from Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, to highlight its campaign over rising violence against teachers.

The injured teacher claimed the school was negligent for not sending the boy, who had a history of bad behaviour, to a special school. Coventry Council did not accept liability, even though its insurance company had paid compensation.

## Code of secrecy masks phone number switch

Telephone codes for Reading are being altered in three weeks time only a year after the much heralded Phone Day transition changed national codes.

Ofcom, the industry watchdog, has agreed to the decision. The new code for the Berkshire town, 01189, will come in on 8 April. In contrast to the multi-million Phone Day publicity last April, Reading's new code has received no publicity and was revealed by a local television station.

Thousands of businesses which altered stationery and hoardings, repainted vans and

changed advertising last April face the same expense again.

Sandy Stephenson, who runs a data recovery firm, said she heard of the change during a business conversation. "I was just talking and this guy asked me if I knew about the phone code change ... I was astounded to be told the date."

Ofcom said the telephone companies had not revealed the date because they were not ready to go public. "The publicity will start at the beginning of parallel running when both codes will work. The final change will not be until January 1998."

## Primary league table plan

JUDITH JUDD  
Education Editor

A local authority is to publish the first school league table for seven-year-olds after a study showed that schools make an important difference to children's progress even in the first two years of primary school.

The Government has decided not to publish league tables for primary schools based on national tests for seven-year-olds. Teachers argue that pupils' social background has more effect than schools on the achievement of the youngest children.

Research among 1,700 four and five-year-olds in the London borough of Wandsworth, released yesterday, will form the basis of the table.

Dr Steve Strand, the authority's head of research, compared the scores of children when they were tested at five with those in the national tests for seven-year-olds.

When pupils were tested on entering school, the results they might be expected to get at seven were predicted. After the results of the tests were known, the actual scores were compared with those predicted.

Dr Strand said: "We can identify differences between schools in the progress made by their pupils. But we are still

some way from being able to say what it is that schools do that makes this difference."

The study also found that children who had received nursery education scored higher in the assessment at five than those who did not. Pupils who changed school between five and seven did not score lower marks than predicted.

Wandsworth was the first authority to introduce testing for five-year-olds. Ministers are considering a proposal from the Prime Minister to assess all children when they start school and some other local authorities, such as Birmingham, have begun to do so.

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# By-election test for 'Tory unity' over Europe

The Staffordshire South East by-election gives the Tory party the chance to prove its new unity on Europe and turn the tide of electoral defeats, the Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said on a visit to Tamworth, the constituency's main town.

"There have been divisions in the past," Mr Rifkind said. "What was significant this week was that the White Paper which I produced was welcomed across the spectrum of the Conservative benches."

He would not be drawn, however, on the electoral impact of the expected decision to promise a referendum as a condition of joining a single European currency. Would it help the Tory candidate, Jimmy James?

"As I don't yet know what the conclusion is, I can't speculate on what its political effects might be," Mr Rifkind said. Mr James is in favour of a referendum. "If Parliament should decide that we should join the single currency, then I think a referendum would be a suitable way of gauging the public support," he said. But he added: "We want the best economic policy for our country. If that is that we should join a single currency, then well and good, but

The Government hopes the recent White Paper will help halt its run of poll defeats. **John Rentoul reports**

if not, we should not. I think the Prime Minister and the Chancellor have played it exactly right," he said. In the present Tory climate, an endorsement of Ken Clarke comes close to a factional statement.

Paradoxically, it is Labour's Brian Jenkins, the clear favourite to win the seat, who is marginally the most Euro-sceptical of the three main party candidates.

Mr Jenkins, leader of Tamworth council, said: "There are conditions in the real economy that must be met before we can even contemplate whether we can go into a single currency. But I am very keen to ensure that all the implications must be spelled out - and if that means it can't be done at a general election, then we would have to look at a referendum as a possibility."

Jennette Davy, the Liberal Democrat, was happy to be described as a federalist, and said she felt strongly about "partnership in Europe".

The decision by Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party

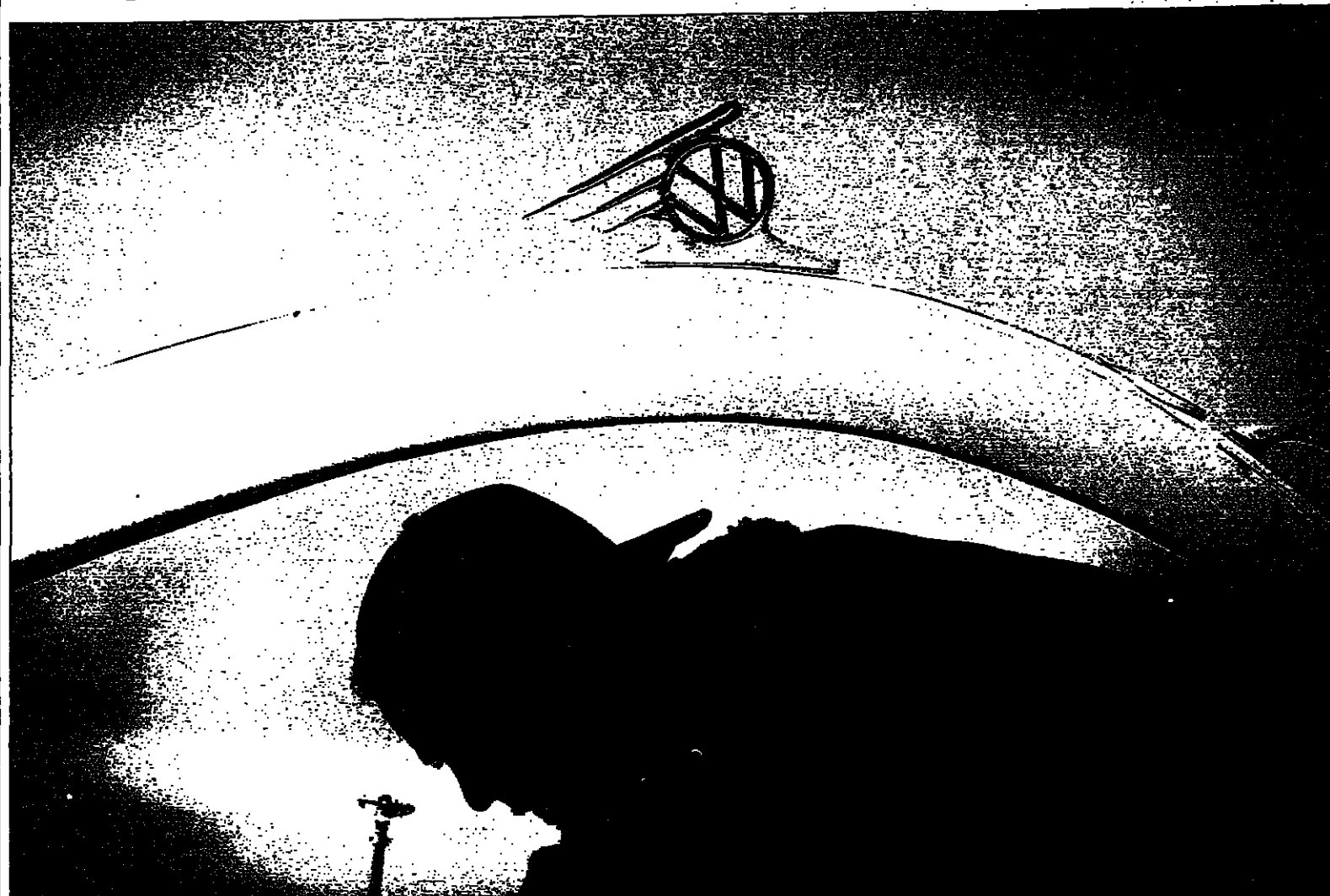
not to contest the by-election means anti-EU voters must look to Andrew Smith, 27, the UK Independence Party candidate. He claims the vote on 11 April "could change the course not just of British but of European history".

In practice, however, the political significance of the by-election in this prosperous seat is likely to be that it will test the extent to which economic recovery is feeding through to a political recovery for the Tories.

Mr Rifkind insisted during his visit on Thursday that Labour support for the European social chapter and a minimum wage threatened prospects for a town which has more home owners than Cheltenham, Chichester and Tunbridge Wells. But the depth of alienation against the Government makes it unlikely that the Tories will reverse their run of by-election defeats.

Result at 1992 general election: D Lightbown (C) 29,180; B Jenkins (Lab) 21,988; N Pennington (LibDem) 5,540; J Taylor (SDP) 895. Maj 7192.

## Eyes down for a weekend Beetle drive



Lifting the lid: Dean Richman inspects his 1958 'Resto Cal' Volkswagen Beetle on the eve of the National Volkswagen Show at Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, this weekend. Of course, like any other owner, he knows the engine is located behind the back seat. Photograph: Martin Godwin

## Ford addresses women's issues

ROS WYNNE-JONES

Motoring may still be a man's world, but a new generation of designers are determined to strike a blow for women on the road.

After last month's launch of the "women-friendly" Jaguar XK8, with a handbrake designed not to tangle with skirts, it has been revealed that Ford are developing a concept car with accelerator pedals specially angled so a driver in high heels can put her foot down.

Ford Motors denies leaked reports that the vehicle, code-named Ka, had been designed exclusively for women by female engineers, but admits that some of the features are aimed at addressing women's needs. Last year, nearly half of the 2 million cars sold in Britain were chosen and bought by women and manufacturers are keen to corner the expanding market.

The Ka does not go as far as the XK8, which has special door alcoves to prevent women breaking their nails, but it is believed to contain innovations including a radio shaped for

women's smaller hands and a lower boot, so it is easier to lift heavy objects in and out.

Other special features leaked from Ford's high security design centre in Dinton, Essex, include new controls to help smaller women adjust their seat and a dashboard designed so that shorter arms can reach air vents and the glove compartment without having to stretch.

"We haven't designed a car just for women, because that would be a very foolish marketing strategy," said a Ford spokesman. "But we are aware that some cars are not as suited to women as they could be and we want to make sure our cars are as suitable for women as they are for men. The Fiesta, for example, sells very well to women, but it is not a 'women's car'."

The car's name comes from Egyptian mythology, in which Ka was a spirit "supposedly dwelling as a vital force in a man or statue". The current model is a 'study vehicle' to be 'modified after a period of consultation with customers'. It is due to be launched later this year.

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# Israel lifts West Bank state of siege

PATRICK COCKBURN  
Jerusalem

Israel said yesterday it was lifting the internal blockade of West Bank towns and villages which it imposed after the last suicide bomb in Tel Aviv. It was the most severe curfew imposed on the 1.2 million Palestinians on the West Bank since the Gulf war and had created widespread anger.

The town closure will not be renewed except for a few areas for security reasons, said an army statement. At the same

time Israel will continue to prevent Palestinians entering Israel from Gaza and the West Bank. At the peace summit in Egypt this week, Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, had demanded that the state of siege be lifted.

But while it is easing conditions for Palestinians on the West Bank, Israel is contemplating two measures likely to produce a fresh cycle of violence – the deportation of leaders of Hamas, the Islamic political movement, and military retaliation against guerrillas in

Lebanon for recent ambushes of Israeli troops occupying the south of the country.

Shimon Peres, the prime minister, says he approves of the expulsion of Hamas activists though not of their families. Deportation of Hamas leaders, similar to the Israeli action in 1992 when 415 were expelled, is likely to heighten tension on the West Bank and will be difficult to carry out since the political leaders of the movement are mostly in Gaza.

In Lebanon, where five Israeli soldiers were killed and 21

wounded in ten days by Hizbollah, the Lebanese guerrilla movement, a senior military officer said: "Hizbollah has crossed all red lines. We cannot continue restraining ourselves." Another officer predicted a serious military operation in Lebanon. Commentators say action was delayed while President Clinton was visiting Israel after the Sharm el-Sheikh summit.

Palestinians were also upset by the endorsement of Israeli policy by President Clinton, who appeared to justify the closure on security grounds.

during his visit to Israel. For ten days the sick have had difficulty reaching hospitals and food supplies have been running low. "Primary health services are paralysed and deaths have resulted from people's inability to access health services," according to Dr. Mustafa Barghouti of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees.

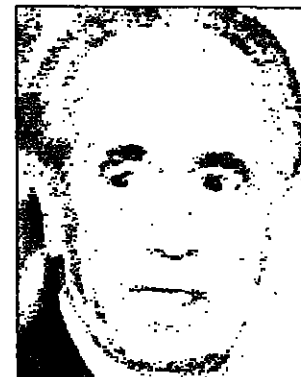
Dr Barghouti said that in St John Hospital in East Jerusalem, only 13 out of 80 nurses have been able to get to work and at another no more than 26 per cent of beds are

occupied because patients are stopped at Israeli checkpoints. The Land and Water Establishment, a Palestinian human rights organisation, says that five people have now died.

In one case Hanan Zair, a pregnant Palestinian woman in labour on her way to hospital in Bethlehem, was detained by an Israeli checkpoint where she gave birth to twins. Her family say that they were delayed an hour as a result of which both babies died later in hospital. An army investigation contends that one was born dead.

Palestinian leaders argue that the closure has generated such friction it will erode support for the Oslo agreements and lead to fresh attacks. Many measures common during the Palestinian intifada in 1987 to 1992 returned, including the stripping of curfew-breakers and forcing them to walk home naked.

Meanwhile, the absence of more suicide bombs exploding since 4 March, the Sharm el-Sheikh summit and the supportive visit of President Clinton are helping Mr Peres in his election campaign. In the lat-



Shimon Peres: Clampdown has helped election hopes

est poll in the daily *Yedioth Aharnon* he leads Binyamin Netanyahu, the leader of the right-wing Likud party, by 50 per cent to 47 per cent.

## Lebanon's fear: 'They are coming'

ROBERT FISK  
Beirut

They came back yesterday, eight Israeli jets flying high over Beirut and the village of Nahme, five miles south of the capital, circling for three hours, taking photographs – or so the Lebanese believed – and prompting UN troops in southern Lebanon to prepare their red alert codes for the next few days. "They are coming," a security official said at midday, without suggesting the time or the place. And Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, did nothing to lessen Lebanon's fears.

In just 10 days, Lebanese Hizbollah guerrillas have killed five Israeli occupation soldiers and wounded another 11, two of them seriously, inside southern Lebanon, their latest attack – a roadside bomb against an Israeli convoy – coinciding with the Sharm el-Sheikh "anti-terrorism" conference. "We will draw the appropriate conclusions," Mr Peres said yesterday. "We have decided not to dance to their tune and we will decide how to deal with these provocations." But Hizbollah also knows the tune and is well aware that the Israelis will retaliate.

Not only has Hizbollah attacked Israeli troops in the occupation zone but it is now warning of a more bloody war in the south of the country. "The struggle against Israel is going to get bigger, more powerful and more effective," Sayed

Hassan Nasrallah, the Hizbollah leader, told journalists in Beirut. "Clinton's threats against the Hizbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad will only increase our determination."

President Clinton, visiting Israel on Thursday, chose to include the Hizbollah as "enemies of peace" even though the pro-Iranian guerrilla movement – while it maintains a ferocious resistance war in southern Lebanon – was not involved in the suicide bombings which prompted the summit.

The conference, according to Sayed Nasrallah, was held "to terrorise those who struggle against Israeli occupation and American hegemony in the region and to save Peres' head in the peace process". Arabs who participated in the summit – including Egypt, Jordan, the PLO, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Algeria, Oman and Yemen – were "slaves paying homage to their American master."

But where will the Israelis strike? Lebanon, as Israel knows all too well from its disastrous 1982 invasion of the country, is a trap for all foreign armies. A land assault would meet fierce Hizbollah resistance; air attacks – especially on the southern suburbs of Beirut where Hizbollah has offices – would incur the risk of massive civilian casualties. In the old days, when the PLO was Israel's enemy and fought from southern Lebanon, Israeli offensives would drive their enemies northwards. But this is no longer the case.

Hizbollah guerrillas have been moving into the south to fight the Israelis and any action there would bring Hizbollah's usual retaliation: showers of Katyusha rockets on to northern Israel, an event which would not exactly encourage Israelis living there to vote for Mr Peres' Labour Party. A raid from the sea by Israeli troops on guerrilla bases near Nahme – held not by the Hizbollah but by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command – cannot be ruled out. But the last time the Israelis staged such an assault, in 1987, it turned into a fiasco when the Palestinians fought back, killing an Israeli colonel and wounding several of his comrades.

Syria's 20,000 troops in Lebanon will almost certainly not be attacked; however stalled the Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations in the US may be, Mr Peres will not want to offend President Assad or provoke a total break in the talks.

What the Lebanese are asking is how far the US will go in encouraging Israel to strike back in Lebanon for suicide bombings staged by men from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It would be naive to think that US "anti-terrorism" aid for Israel stops at technical assistance. Have the Americans given a green light to Mr Peres to hit at the organisation which once held western hostages in Lebanon? And if so – given the fact that only a full-scale invasion would put them on the defensive – to what end?



Taking a bow: Worshippers outside a mosque in Gaza City yesterday, watched by a Palestinian policeman

Photograph: Adel Hana

## Egypt's chief sheikh dies aged 79

Cairo (Reuters) – The Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, head of Egypt's highest religious authority and an influential voice of conservative Islam, died yesterday aged 79.

Sheikh Gadd el-Haq Ali Gadd el-Haq supported female circumcision and recently urged tough punishment for

Muslims breaking fasting laws in the holy month of Ramadan.

Thousands of mourners joined government ministers, Islamic and Coptic Christian leaders for his funeral at the 1,000-year-old Al-Azhar mosque. Hundreds of police, some in full riot gear, watched as chanting crowds followed the coffin.

Appointed Sheikh of Al-Azhar by the Egyptian government in 1982, he has spoken out strongly against militants waging a campaign of violence against President Mubarak's government. But he is also said to have issued a *fatwa* urging the government to execute opponents of female circumcision.



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## international

# 'Silk Curtain' cuts Europe in two once more

TONY BARBER  
Europe Editor

A new "Silk Curtain", replacing the Iron Curtain of old, is falling across eastern Europe, separating countries that are entrenching themselves in the Western world from countries that are slipping back into Russia's embrace.

While Western governments talk publicly of building a Europe undivided by political or ideological fault lines - "a Europe whole and free" - in the words of George Bush, the former US President - the reality is that some countries are binding themselves closely to the West and others are experiencing a gravitational pull towards Russia.

Those which stand clearly on the Western side of the line include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. Those on the Russian side include Belarus and the three Transcaucasian states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In a grey zone, with their future status unclear, are Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Officially, European governments consider the term "spheres of influence" a dirty phrase these days. Privately, however, diplomats acknowledge that the West and Russia are involved in a silent struggle over where the new dividing line in eastern Europe will be drawn.

Russia's parliament, where the resurgent Communist Party is the dominant faction, made clear its views yesterday by approving a resolution that denounced the abolition of the Soviet Union. By 250 votes to 98, the State Duma (lower house) urged President Boris Yeltsin to reintegrate Russia with former Soviet republics that have been independent since 1991.

That process is already in motion in the case of Belarus, whose pro-Moscow president, Alexander Lukashenko, refers to Russia as "the great motherland". He favours not only an economic and military union with Russia but also the construction of a road "corridor" through Belarus to link the Russian heartland with the Russian-owned enclave of Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea.

That proposal has caused alarm bells to ring in Poland, since the road would probably pass through Lithuania - implicitly increasing Russian influence over an important Polish neighbour - and possibly through part of Poland. Russia's Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, told Polish leaders this week that "all the talk about the corridor was a misunderstanding", but Mr Lukashenko seems

to be entirely serious about it.

Russia's principal objective in Eastern Europe is to prevent its former Warsaw Pact allies from becoming full members of Nato, a move that it says would threaten Russian security by bringing a Western military presence up to its doorstep. For its part, the Western alliance hopes to take in some new members, but is playing down the issue for fear of jeopardising Mr Yeltsin's chances of re-election next June.

Moscow has floated two ideas as possible compromises over Nato enlargement. One is to offer the eastern Europeans a joint Western-Russian security guarantee, and the other is to let them acquire political but not military membership of Nato.

Neither suggestion appeals to the Czech Republic and Poland, which are likely to be among the first new Nato members. The Czech Foreign Minister, Josef Zieleniec, said bluntly this week that the terms of his country's entry into Nato were a matter for discussion between Prague and the Western alliance, "but definitely not with Russia".

Poland's Foreign Minister, Dariusz Rosati, recalled how a British-French guarantee had failed to save Poland in 1939. Flatly rejecting the idea that Poland should be left as a buffer state between the West and Russia, he said: "Poland is determined to seek Nato membership. History shows guarantees are inadequate."

While the Czechs, Hungarians and Poles are developing ever closer relationships with the West, a question mark still hangs over Slovakia. The US and the European Union have publicly rebuked the government of Vladimir Meciar, the Prime Minister, for failing to observe Western standards of democracy.

Last week, the government approved a draft law ordering the imprisonment of people organising anti-government rallies or spreading "false information" about Slovakia abroad.

There is strong evidence that Russia is seeking to exploit Slovakia's bad relationship with the West to its own advantage. The Russians recently offered Slovakia a deal guaranteeing long-term economic supplies in return for Slovak neutrality.

According to central European officials, Mr Meciar personally turned down the proposal. This suggests that, despite its current difficulties, Slovakia is broadly set on the path of integration with the West.

Less clear is the future of the Baltic states and Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were annexed by Moscow in 1940 and broke free in 1991, want to join Nato, but Estonia in particular is on extremely bad terms with Russia.

It is far from certain that Nato will ever feel confident about offering the Baltic states the unconditional security guarantee that comes with alliance membership. Western governments have a strong commitment to maintaining Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity, but it seems unlikely that this will translate into a military guarantee.

Bulgaria and Romania are both anxious to detach themselves from Russian influence, but Bulgaria especially depends heavily on Russia for its energy supplies, a factor limiting its freedom of manoeuvre. Neither seems likely to be among the first new entrants into Nato and the European Union.



Relatives of Shain Ahmed, killed during anti-government riots in the Adamjee district of Dhaka, grieving yesterday. During the past fortnight, 34 people have been killed in the Bangladeshi capital as security forces have clashed with activists. Photograph: Pavel Rahman / AP



## US failure on Bosnian arms exposes split

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY  
Defence Correspondent

The US failed yesterday to persuade the leading European powers to help re-arm the mainly Muslim Bosnian armed forces. The move has revealed a split which threatens to divide not only the Nato nations in the peace Implementation Force but also the five-nation "contact group".

Representatives of more than 30 countries met in Ankara to discuss US proposals to re-arm and re-train the Bosnian government forces. But Britain and France were only observers and the Russians refused to attend.

The US wants to build up the forces of the Bosnian government and their Croat allies - before the withdrawal of the Nato-led peace force, 1-For, at the end of the year - as a counterweight to the better-armed Bosnian Serb forces. Britain and France always opposed arming one side in the civil war and still oppose arming the Muslim-Croat entity before 1-For withdraws, in case the arms are turned on their peacekeeping troops.

If the US drive succeeds, Britain, France and Russia will not only be humiliated diplomatically but will also be excluded from arms sales. US equipment and training played a major part in Croatia's victories last summer and are also used by Turkey and Saudi Arabia, which have played a lead-

ing role in supporting US efforts to re-arm the Bosnian Muslims.

So far, the US has offered \$100m and was trying yesterday to gain further contributions from oil-rich Arab states. Bosnia's senior representative, Muhamed Sacirbey, is seeking \$750m to \$1bn in the first year.

Mr Sacirbey said the Bosnian forces had about 200,000 men under arms and that although the economy would benefit from demobilising some of the troops, it would cost more money in the short term.

The Bosnian army is a mainly infantry force and needs more heavy weapons. Colonel Terry Taylor of the International Institute for Strategic Studies said yesterday that the first priority would be light armoured vehicles of the type widely used by the British and French in Bosnia, and light artillery. Although Britain and France are most unlikely to supply arms now, diplomatic sources said Britain might assist in other areas, such as training in mine-clearance.

Experts agree that the most important part of strengthening the Bosnian armed forces will be improving command, control, communications and training, plus support including trucks and rations.

The UN attacked Bosnia's government yesterday for failing to curb looting and intimidation of Serbs in the Ilidza district of Sarajevo, now returned to Muslim-Croat control.

Letters, page 14

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# Copycat killing fuels video violence debate

MARY DEJEVSKY  
Paris

When the British video launch of Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* was cancelled this week after the Dunblane tragedy, the decision had particular resonance in France. A debate about media violence is raging here, centred on that same film and a couple of teenage killers.

Two weeks ago, police discovered a cassette of the film in the bloodstained bedroom of a 17-year-old — referred to only by his first name, Sébastien, for legal reasons — after a particularly bizarre and gruesome murder. The bloodstained body of a 16-year-old boy called Abdel Gharbiche had been found, wrapped in bedclothes, under the patio of Sébastien's family's respectable detached house near Paris. Abdel had been stabbed more than 40 times.

According to the police who

questioned Sébastien and his 18-year-old girlfriend, Véronique Herbert, the scenario for the murder bore an uncanny resemblance to the plot of *Natural Born Killers*.

Together, it is said, they agreed that Véronique would lure Abdel, a one-time school friend, into bed. Sébastien would find them together and see whether he was sufficiently overcome with jealousy to kill. That, more or less, is what seems to have happened, with a couple of unforeseen hitches: Véronique was accidentally grazed with the knife and had to seek hospital treatment during their subsequent flight. In addition, they had not anticipated the quantities of blood.

In the days that followed the discovery of Abdel's body, the hunt for Véronique and Sébastien was the talk of France. They had taken off in a Renault belonging to Sébastien's father.

For two days there was no trace of them; then police were called to a garage in a small town in the Cantal, one of the wildest regions of central France, where a young couple had filled up with diesel and driven away without paying. The police lost the trail, but finally Véronique and Sébastien were cornered in a town 70km away in the rush-hour crowds.

According to police reports — released, unlike in Britain, at the time charges are laid — they admitted the killing at once. Véronique, a year older than Sébastien and past the age of majority, was dubbed the mastermind — "Véronique diabolique". Called confident and unrepentant, when advised to cover her head to thwart photographers on her way into the police station, she declined.

The French media made much of her background. Her parents were separated and

she had lived briefly with her father, an enthusiast for American Indians, who took her on a trip to the "Wild West" of the US. The press printed pictures of her mixing confidently with the wolves her father kept in a pen by his suburban house.

Véronique, it was said, had been obsessed by death since childhood and written macabre poems since the age of 10. *The Silence of the Lambs* was said to have been her favourite film.

It will be months before the case comes to trial. Meanwhile, the French have found a new reason for herating the influence of American films and have opened a debate about violence on television. To many, the crime is not a one-off act of evil, but the logical culmination of what they see as a growing culture of violence that makes it acceptable to bring knives, tear-gas pellets and even guns into the school playground.



Mourners at the funeral of Zahra Rajabi in Paris yesterday. Rajabi, 37, a member of the Iranian National Resistance Council, was assassinated in Istanbul on 20 February. Photograph: Jacques Ennon / AP

## IN BRIEF

**Yeltsin claims to have Chechen peace plan**  
Moscow — President Boris Yeltsin, facing an election in June, said he had a peace plan for Chechnya but kept it under wraps. Russian troops continued shelling in the separatist region. Liberal Russian MPs visiting Chechnya said the troops were targeting villages filled with civilians and refugees were pouring out to escape. Mr Yeltsin, who has said solving the crisis is crucial for his chances of re-election on 16 June, has made much of the proposed plan but has put off a final decision on it. *Reuters*

**Sierra Leone votes for end to war**  
Freetown — Sierra Leoneans voted in a final round of elections to restore civilian rule to their war-weary country, apparently undeterred by a spate of attacks and atrocities designed to discourage polling. Rebels killed 55 people on Tuesday in a vehicle travelling outside the second town of Bo. In Freetown, voting in the presidential run-off between Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, 64, and John Karefa-Smart, 81, started slowly but soon picked up and long queues formed outside polling stations. *Reuters*

**Russians play fowl**  
Moscow — The US-Russian "chicken war" heated up, with officials saying a ban on importing American poultry could be in place as soon as today. Ryacheklav Avilov, Russia's chief veterinary inspector, said US standards were inadequate and the ban would go into effect unless a last-minute meeting with the Americans could be arranged. "Americans have met almost all our demands," he said. "The only question now is how to control salmonella." *AP*

**Sky will be the limit for pilots**  
Washington — The US announced a project to let pilots set their own course through the skies. Faster travel, lower costs and improved safety are expected from the so-called free-flight plan. "It's the right time to begin. It will be a long-term effort," Federal Aviation Administrator David Hinson said. He estimated that a decade may be needed fully to phase in free flight. *AP*

**Germans issue warrant for top Iranian**  
Berlin — German federal prosecutors have issued an arrest warrant for Iranian intelligence minister Ali Fallahian in connection with the 1992 killing of exiled Kurdish leaders in Berlin, a lawyer involved in the case said yesterday. "In the judge's view, the minister is strongly suspected of ordering and masterminding the attack," Hans-Joachim Ehrig, who represents families of the victims, said, referring to the investigating magistrate who must approve arrest warrants. *Reuters*



**Renoir stolen from Belgrade gallery**  
Belgrade — A thief cut a Renoir from its frame and fled the National Museum here before anyone noticed. *The Woman Bathing* disappeared on Thursday from the museum, said to be known for its light security. *AP*

**Orangutans threatened with extinction**  
Jakarta — Orangutans in Indonesia's east Kalimantan province on Borneo island are on the brink of extinction because development is destroying their habitat. Soepomo, head of the Samarinda Forestry Research Centre, was quoted as telling the founder and president of the World Wide Fund for Nature, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. *Reuters*

**Semtex firm's environmental bombshell**  
Prague — The Synthesis firm, known as the maker of Semtex, said it had won an environmental prize sponsored by a foundation linked to the Prince of Wales. It said Britain's ambassador to Prague presented the award from the Czech arm of The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum. It honoured a big reduction in air pollutants resulting from installation of cleaning devices at its plant in the central Czech town of Pardubice. *Reuters*

**Swedes on course for new PM**  
Stockholm — The Finance Minister, Goran Persson, was made leader of Sweden's ruling Social Democratic Party, replacing retiring Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson. Mr Persson, 46, will be appointed prime minister next week. *Reuters*

**Spanish legionnaires riot**  
Melilla — More than 100 Spanish Legionnaires were confined to their barracks after rampaging through this North African Spanish territory following the killing of a legionnaire the previous day in a bar brawl. *AP*

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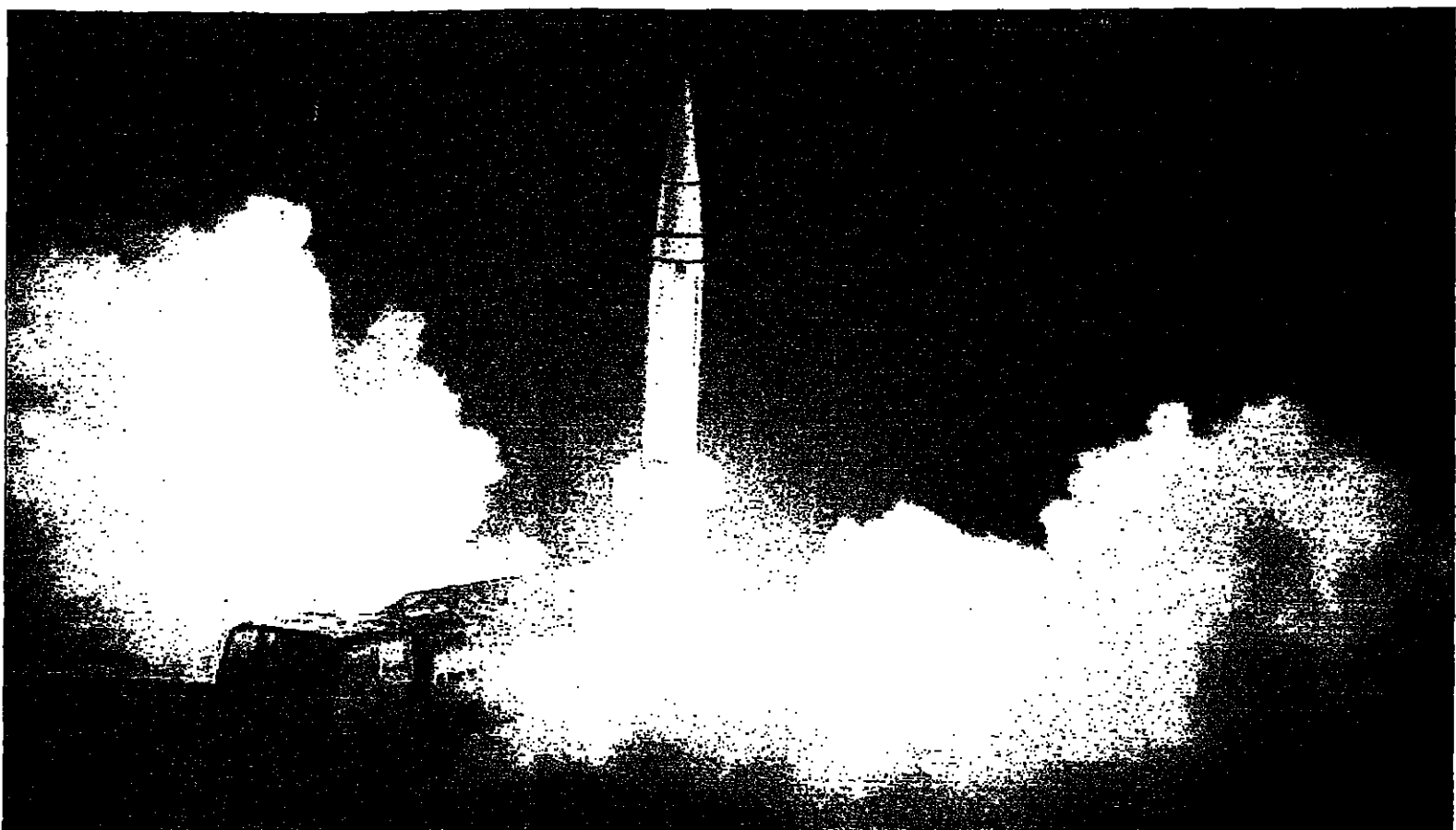
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# international



Just testing: A ground-to-ground missile being launched by the PLA's Second Artillery Force during exercises near Taiwan. Photograph: AP

## China keeps up the pressure on defiant Taiwan

TERESA POOLE  
Taiwan

China has no imminent plan to attack Taiwan but will continue to flex its military muscles against the island state long after next week's presidential elections, analysts forecast. "This year is the year of threats for Taiwan," said Yang Chih-heng, senior military researcher at the Institute for National Policy Research in Taipei.

China is trying to allay fears that it plans to invade Taiwanese territory, while keeping pressure on President Lee Teng-hui, the expected election winner. In Washington, the Pentagon said China had explicitly told the administration

that no invasion of Taiwan was planned.

China's first missile tests ended yesterday but the large-scale live-fire naval and aircraft exercises are scheduled to continue until Wednesday, yesterday Peking announced new war games which will straddle the 23 March elections. The March 18-25 manoeuvres in the Taiwan Strait will be the closest so far to Taiwanese-held territory.

The Taiwanese said suspected new movements of People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft had been detected in Fuzhou, at the north end of the Taiwan Strait.

Few on the island expect life to quieten down after the election. Andrew Yang, secretary-general of the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies, said: "I think China will continue to use the mixed political, economic, military and diplomatic measures to force Taiwan to come to the negotiating table after the election."

Peking is determined to curb Mr Lee's push for greater diplomatic recognition and to thwart Taiwan's attempt to obtain a UN seat. If he is re-elected, more foreign visits by Mr Lee are likely to prompt retaliation by Peking, which was enraged by his visit in June to the US.

China's strategy is to affect public opinion by targeting the economy. Intermittent military manoeuvres are likely to persist, to keep Taiwan's financial markets and business community on edge. Yang Chih-heng said he expected more missile tests into target zones close to Taiwan later this year. "Perhaps the next ones will be in the East China Sea. Maybe around 20 May, when the new president is inaugurated," he said.

The central-bank governor, Shou Yuan-dong, said up to \$4bn (£2.6bn) had left Taiwan recently as residents converted savings out of the local currency. Taipei spent \$1.5bn in the past two weeks buying shares to prop up the local stock market.

Trade and investment are likely to be the next to suffer. Taiwanese figures show \$24bn is invested in industrial ventures in China's southern provinces along the Taiwan Strait and Taiwanese investors will become increasingly nervous the longer the crisis continues. China will have to bear the fall-off in investment but it can weather a down-turn.

Mainland concern about Mr Lee's policies is unlikely to abate. "It seems they are getting very impatient about Taiwan's current political development... the next generation, when they

are up to the required age to vote, that young generation does not want any kind of reunification," said Andrew Yang.

Peking wants immediate concessions from Taiwan, including an explicit commitment to reunification. But Andrew Yang said it was out of the question. Mr Lee would make political concessions after the election, partly because of pressure by the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party. His ruling Kuomintang National Party has a majority of just one in the Legislative Yuan.

The best Peking can hope for is lower-level compromises by Mr Lee, who is anxious to ease tension. He may agree to discuss direct air, shipping and postal links, which the mainland has been calling for. He will probably also propose opening discussions on the peaceful settlement of cross-strait relations.



Lee: Unlikely to make any political concessions

But this is unlikely to placate Peking. "What China is trying to pursue is the political issue," said Andrew Yang.

For the PLA, the East China Sea will become its priority area for regional security. Peking's aggressive stance will include more investment in defence. It is already set to buy more Su-27 aircraft from Russia and is keen to purchase more submarines, which would have a role in mounting any blockade of Taiwan.

Taiwan also wants to increase its submarine fleet from four to 12, F-16 and Mirage aircraft on order will start arriving later this year.

Rhetoric will remain shrill as the two sides stake out positions. "Taiwan will stress political reform, and the mainland will stress nationalism," said Yang Chih-heng. But Peking realises it has a window of opportunity in terms of the effectiveness of its bombast before Taiwan's new arms are delivered. "Peking knows now is the time," said Yang Chih-heng.

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1	85	75	65
2	88	78	68
3	90	80	70
4	92	82	72
5	95	85	75

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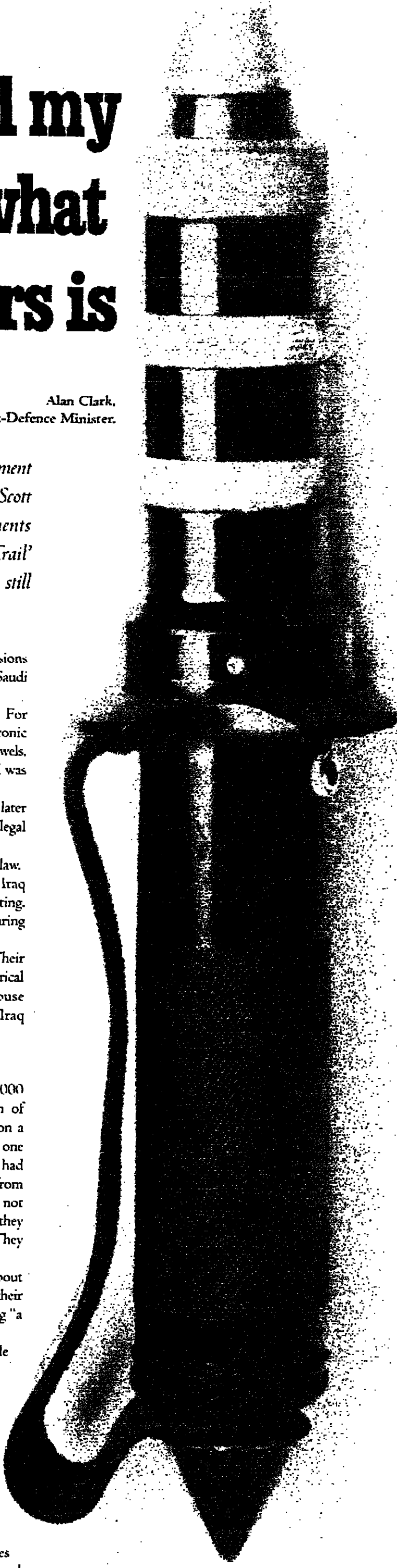
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The world's politicians had a lot to be silent about. In March 1988, world opinion was outraged when 5,000 people died after Iraqi jets attacked the Kurdish town of Halabja with chemicals. In April, after a similar attack on a village, some men found a small boy and girl clinging to one another. While running away through a wheat field they had been attacked by an Iraqi helicopter and got separated from their parents. The parents had died but the children did not know this. They kept saying that when it grew light they would go and look for them. They thought it was night. They did not realise that they were blind.

China? But after pro-democracy supporters were massacred in Tiananmen Square, hadn't Sir Geoffrey Howe announced in the House of Commons: "I'm sure that all members of the House will share the worldwide sense of horror and join in the international condemnation of the slaughter of innocent

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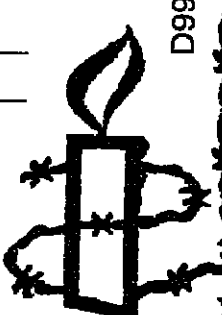
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## international

# UN targets aid to build a new Africa

DAVID ORR  
Nairobi

The United Nations biggest ever campaign for the development of Africa – recognised as “the world’s foremost development challenge” – was unveiled amid much fanfare yesterday.

The so-called Special Initiative on Africa was launched by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, in tandem with the World Bank and UN agencies in Nairobi, Geneva, New York, Paris and Rome.

“Now is the time for the United Nations and international community as a whole to stand together with Africa,” he said. “Now is the time for us to forge a new partnership.”

“We want today to tell Africa solemnly it isn’t alone. It isn’t abandoned. It is more than ever in the sight of the world... I’m not appealing to the gen-

erosity of the international community. I’m appealing to its conscience,” he said.

The programme, whose estimated cost over a 10-year period is \$25bn, aims to expand basic education and health care, to promote peace and better governance, and to improve water and food security.

The huge cost of the initiative will have to come from a re-direction of existing UN resources and from a readjustment of African governments’ often much-criticised spending priorities.

It will also require fresh financing from Western governments equivalent to about 20 per cent of current development aid flows to Africa. The sources of funding, given the UN’s current financial difficulties and the pressure on aid budgets, are vague.

Despite the upbeat tone of the initiative, which suggests

that Africa’s prospects for economic recovery are better than ever, the continent remains the only one where, on UN measures, poverty is on the rise.

And though its leaders and visiting aid experts never tire of expounding on its abundant promise and potential, Africa has been beset over the past three decades by repeated economic and social crises.

The results of structural adjustment – the ideology of economic management devised by the World Bank and often criticised by African leaders – have been modest and progress has fallen well short of expectations.

The poor, and particularly women and children, have been the first to suffer as governments have sought – often under extreme duress from the donor community – to live within their means.

Africa has been largely left

behind as countries in Asia and elsewhere have made better use of their resources and competed more effectively on the world market.

Africa’s countries include 22 of the 25 nations identified by the United Nations as having the lowest human development levels in the world, while 33 of the world’s 47 least developed countries are African.

Access to such basic services as health care and primary education in Africa remains lower than anywhere else, while population growth and infant mortality levels are higher. It is estimated that by the turn of the century one-third of the world’s poor will be living in the African continent.

So at a time when many countries continue to be torn apart by conflict – among them Burundi, Sudan, Somalia – the timing of this new UN endeavour is crucial.



Military manoeuvres: Women training yesterday with the Sudanese Popular Defense Force at Khawl, outside Khartoum. The militia – optional for women – provides troops to fight against the southern rebels. Photograph: AP

## Ethiopians edge back from brink of famine

For the first time the country is almost self-sufficient in food, writes David Orr

Addis Ababa – To many in the West, Ethiopia has become synonymous with the terrible famine of 1984-85, when nearly 1 million people died.

Though its sheer scale has earned it a special place in the annals of human suffering, the Eighties famine is by no means unique in Ethiopia’s recent history. In 1973 a drought in the same north-eastern region of the country resulted in the deaths of some 300,000 people.

Again, in 1994, food shortages in the Tigray and Wollo areas killed between 5,000 and 10,000 people.

There are those who believe starvation to be the intermittent but inevitable fate of this part of Africa. Simon Mechale, the man whose unenviable job it is to prevent another famine, is not one of them. But neither is he overly complacent about the future.

“This is the best year in our country for a long time,” Ethiopia’s Commissioner for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness, said. “We’ve had better rain, there’s peace and the government has been helping farmers with fertiliser and improved seeds. But this



Mengistu: Ruthlessly used food as a weapon of war

doesn’t mean there’s no problem. We still need food aid for 2.3 million people this year.”

Ethiopia is one of the most famine-prone countries on Earth. There is a food shortage here every year, a crisis about once a decade. With proper management it is usually possible – as it should be this year – to prevent people dying from starvation. But the threat of disaster is constant and it is likely that the country’s food aid needs will continue to grow rather than diminish.

“To a certain extent we have control over the human elements: what sort of government we have, whether there’s war or peace, whether we’re implementing the correct agricultural policies,” Mr Mechale, an economist with a degree from Bradford University, said. “But if the rain doesn’t come, there’s nothing we can do.”

Among the government’s disaster-prevention schemes is a plan to lessen the country’s dependence on rainfall by utilising rivers, which an official report has said could be harnessed to develop nearly 6 million acres through irrigation.

The underlying problem is that population growth is outstripping agricultural production and the land is simply not fertile enough to support a popu-

lation of 57 million people. Besides, the areas of maximum rainfall do not coincide with the areas of maximum population.

Almost half the inhabitants are judged by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to be under threat from famine.

“Simply put, people are living where they shouldn’t,” Allen Jones, WFP director in Ethiopia, said. “It rains more or less all year round in the west but most of the population is concentrated in the centre, the north and north-east.”

Yet relocation is not the solution it might appear. Around the time of the 1984-85 famine, the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, which fell in 1991, tried to shift whole communities from the beleaguered north and north-east.

It was a disaster: people and cattle used to the highlands fell victim to unfamiliar diseases in the lowlands. And there were outbreaks of ethnic unrest as hitherto unacquainted tribes were forced to compete for scarce resources.

The severity of the 1984-85 famine was exacerbated by the rigidly Marxist Mengistu regime and by its cynical use of food as a weapon of war. Food aid was withheld in an attempt to flush rebels out of their highland strongholds.

Five years of relative peace coupled with the reintroduction of a market economy by the government of Meles Zenawi have helped boost agricultural production. These factors, combined with the good rains of last year, have conspired to make the country, for the first time in recent memory, almost self-sufficient in food.

In the past decade or so Ethiopia needed about 600,000 tonnes of food aid a year. That amounts to an average spending of £80m a year on food aid. But the bulk of the 125,000 tonnes needed this year will be purchased in Ethiopia.

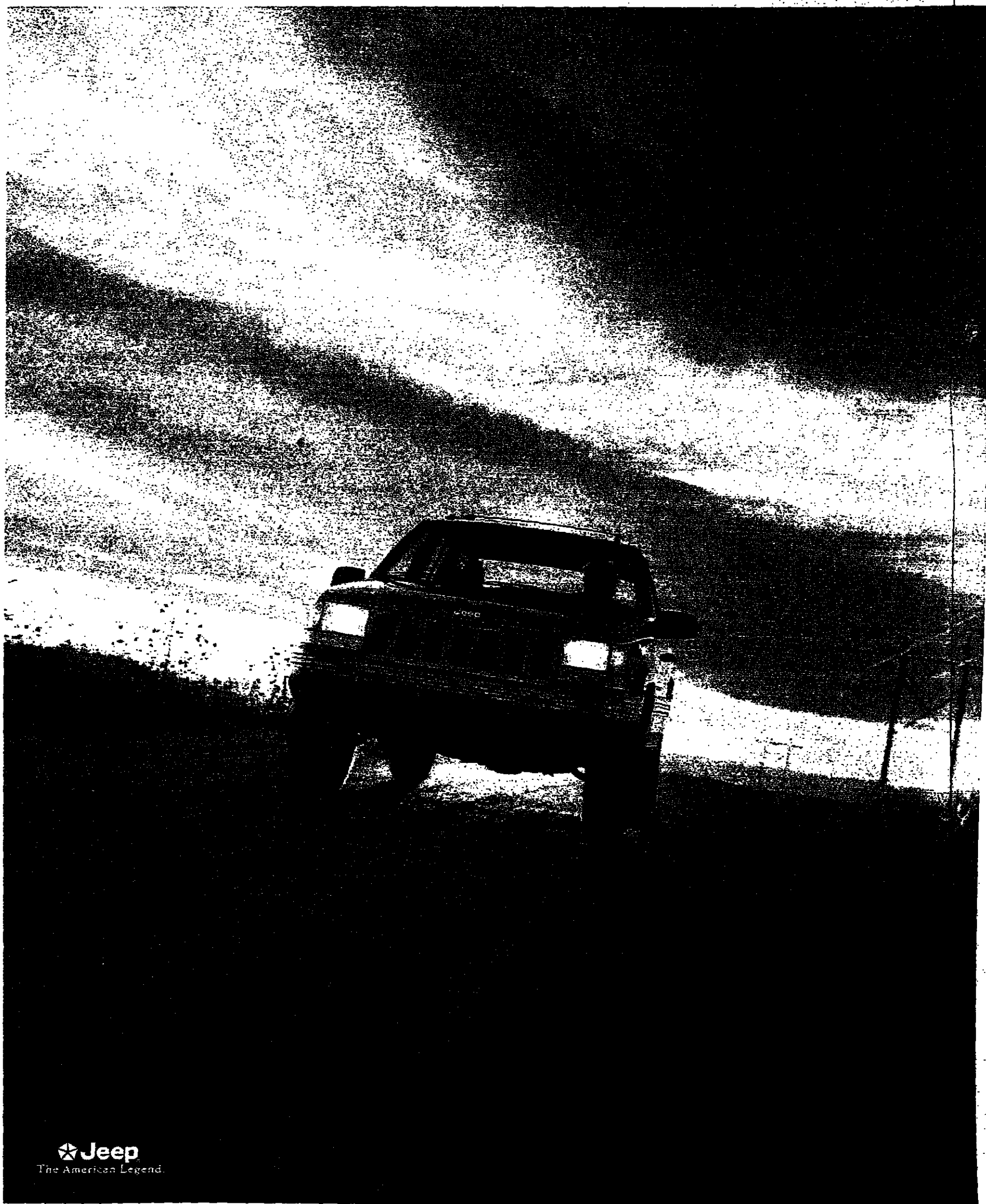
Yet Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries: per capita income is estimated at less than £75 per annum.

“Ethiopia is extremely vulnerable,” Mr Jones said. “In times of drought, the people don’t have enough cattle to sell to tide them over. A man can’t just go out and pawn his wife’s jewellery, because she hasn’t got any. People don’t have much access to jobs; the vast majority just scratch a living from the land.”

Nevertheless, there are signs that the situation is improving. The 1994 drought endangered just as many people as were affected a decade earlier, yet the death-toll was much lower.

The difference was that in 1994 the relief mechanisms were in place. The government, the UN and non-governmental organisations were able to act quickly, implementing a pre-agreed plan and drawing on massive food reserves at strategic locations.

This year, for the first time the government is asking for aid to train people to look after the food needs of their own regions and to detect the early warning signs of food shortages.



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# Weekend

The Independent



Photograph: Nigel Parry/Katz

## Peter Brook

The one that got away

Interview, page 3

### THIS WEEKEND WHY NOT...

#### DISCOVER The Insect World

Get behind the camera in a workshop with *Alien Empire* producer Steve Nicholls and find out how to film an exploding beetle and other mysteries of the natural world. It's National Science Week, an ideal opportunity to send the children on a voyage of discovery.

■ Natural History Museum, London SW7 (0171 336 9123) Adults £5.50, Children £2.80

#### MAKE Your Mother Happy

Sort out a bouquet of flowers, make breakfast in bed and cancel the morning in the kitchen by taking Saturday lunch aboard a steam train. Book now for a traditional five-course dinner on the Mothers' Day special at:

■ Midland Railway Centre, Butterley Station, Ripley, Derby (01773 747674) Adults £11.95, children £7.95

#### SEPARATE Fact from Fiction

A highlight of the London Interactive Book Festival is this afternoon's discussion between the country's leading biographers and writers of historical fiction. Luminaries in attendance include Victoria Glendinning (who bats for both teams), Stella Tillyard, Allan Massie and Melvyn Bragg.

■ National Hall, Olympia, London W14 (01225 448831) 2-5pm, £10

#### BUY Funny Face

Audrey Hepburn was never lovelier than in Stanley Donen's ravishing homage to the fashion photographer of genius, Richard Avedon, played here by Fred Astaire. Style expert Kay Thompson barks at you to banish the beige and "Think Pink", while Hepburn at her most gamine coos her way through "How Long Has This Been Goin' On?"

■ On CIC video, £10.99

#### LAUGH On St Patrick's Day

Scamper off to Battersea Arts Centre, order a pint or three of Guinness, and round off the day with a night of Irish comedy compered by comedy musician John Moloney. Dylan Moran stormed the event last year; he's back with Barry Murphy, Kevin Gidea and Noel Faulkner. Big laughs, late bar and disco.

■ BAC, London SW11 (0171-223 2223) Sunday, 7pm-midnight



Toothache and dental pain?

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INTERVIEW	3
SHOPPING	4-6
ARTS	7-8
BOOKS	9-11
MOTORING	12
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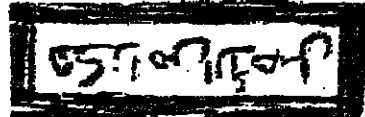
TV & RADIO	
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SUNDAY	31



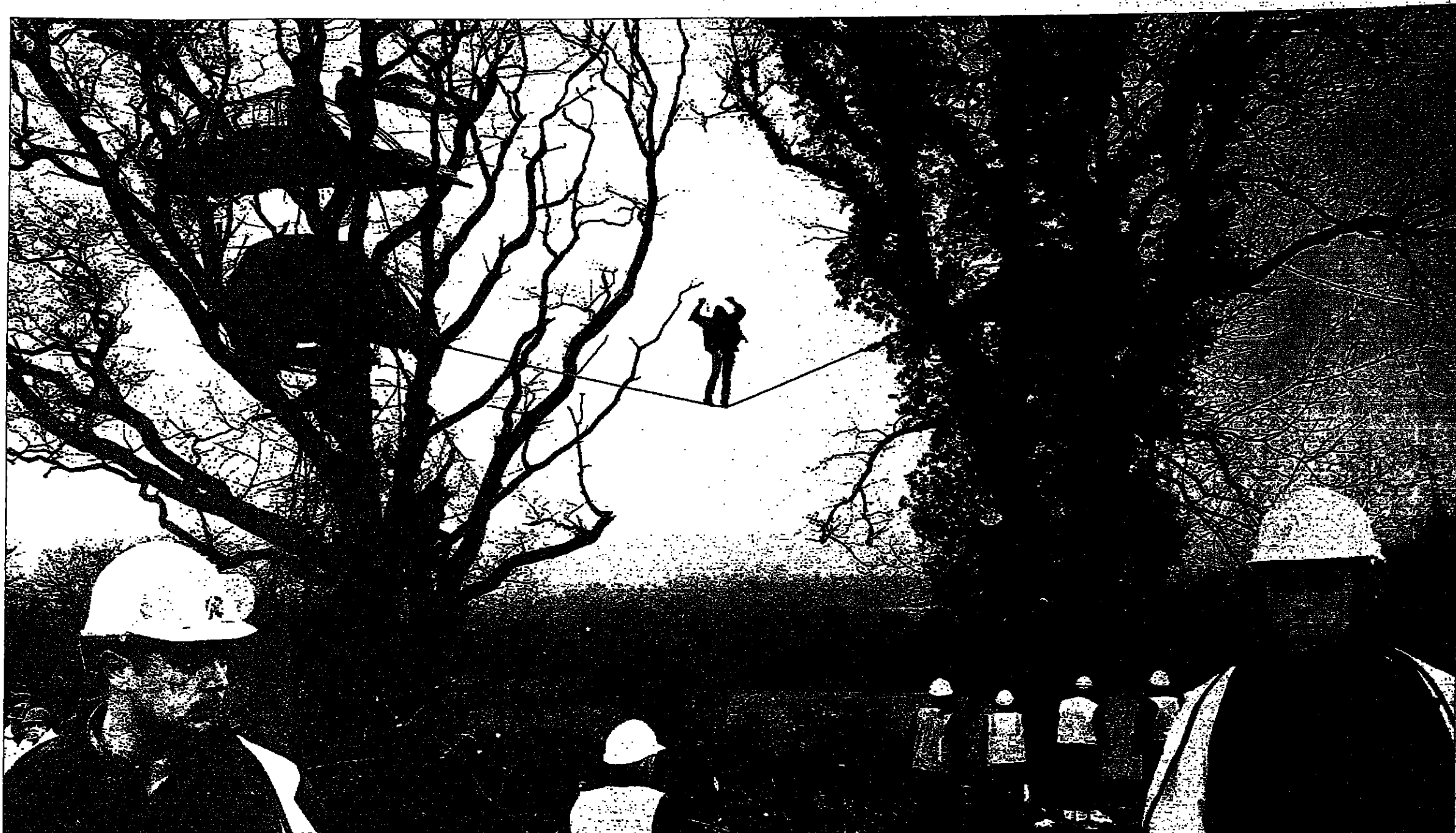
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# picture story



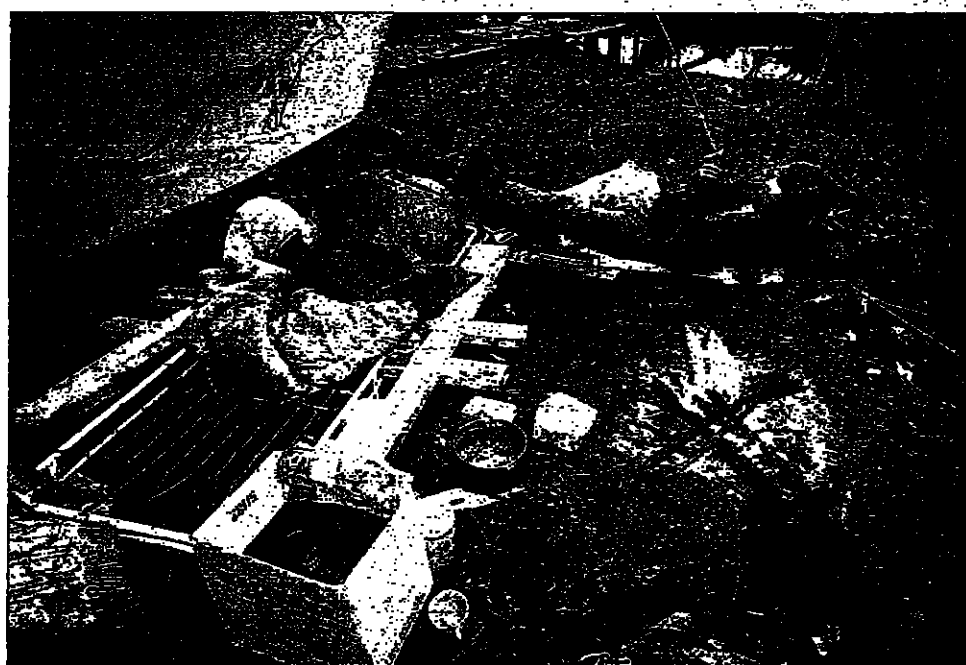
Walk on the wild side: a protester crosses between sky-high tree houses at the Granny Ash camp by means of a nylon walkway. In the foreground, part of the ring formed by the security force when they clear the tree camps

## IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY



Chain-gang: other protesters, some of them local residents, try to stop cherry-pickers and bulldozers moving in by forming a line of their own just outside the security ring

It's more than two months since contractors first started to clear the woodland areas that stand in the path of the proposed Newbury Bypass. Initially outwitted by protesters, they are now rapidly gaining ground. John Voos watched the daily clash of wills in the camps at Granny Ash and Kennet



Dawn radio: at Kennet camp, Jim, a local resident, cradles a CB radio and listens in to find out which camp is being targeted next for eviction. As soon as protesters get hold of this information, they regroup

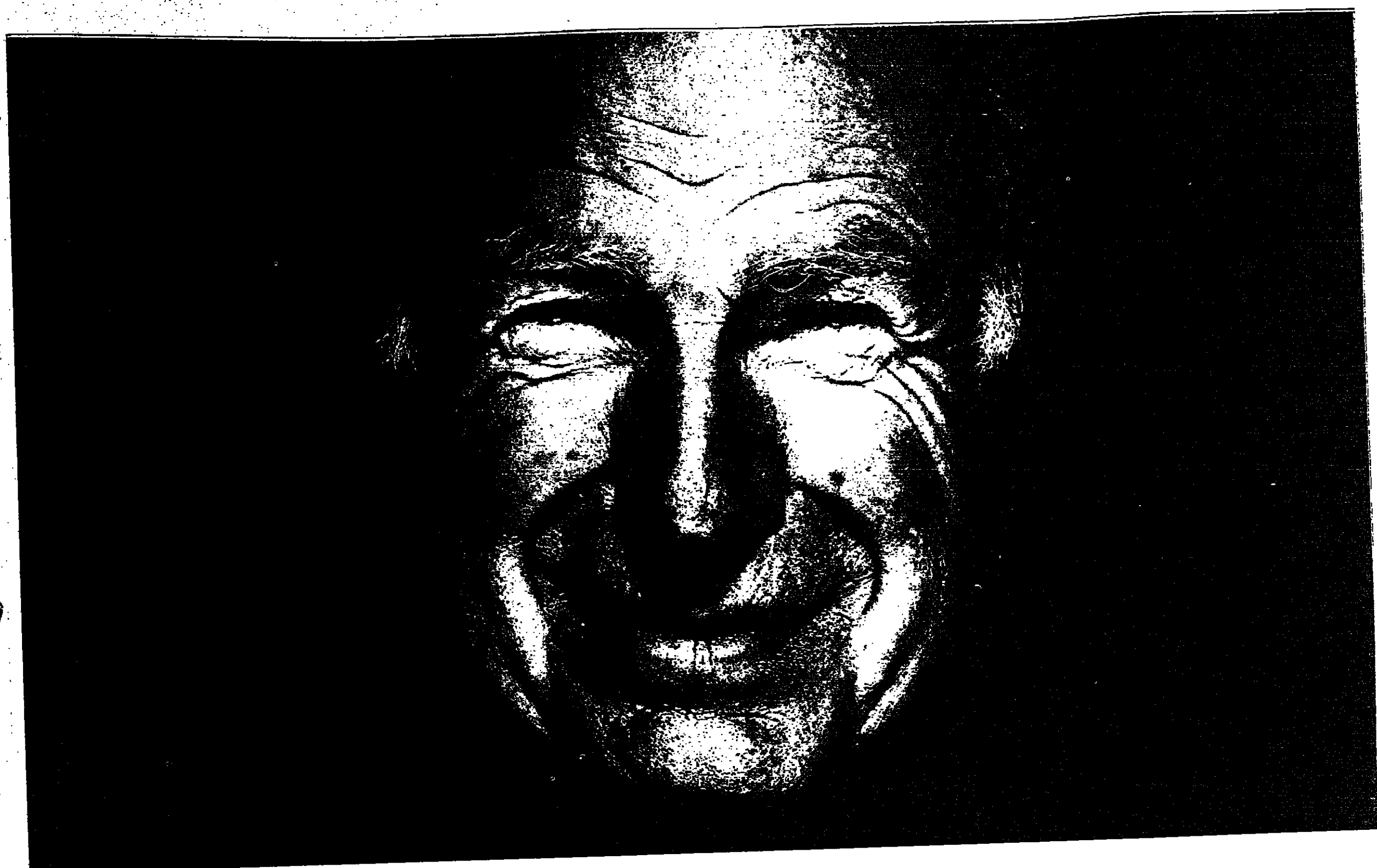


Left: a notepad and a camera are just two of the tools used by legal observers to record unnecessary uses of force (others include camcorders and cassette-recorders). A number of protesters are currently bringing assault charges against individual security guards

Right: contractor-bashing brightens up protesters' days, while, below, small fires keep spirits alive during the long night-watch. Ever since contractors decided to surprise protesters by turning up during the small hours, nothing has been left to chance. But despite the sophistication of the protesters' organisation, Kennet was cleared yesterday after two and a half days' battle. Six of the 28 camps (and the trees that housed them) have now fallen and a seventh, at Castlewood, is currently being cleared







# The king over the water

Board the Eurostar to Paris and just a stone's throw from the Gare du Nord you'll find England's greatest stage director at work on England's greatest play. Paul Taylor asks 'qui est là?' at the court of the Player King

One of the less discussed consequences of the Channel Tunnel and the Eurostar is that English theatregoers are now only three hours away from the work of the man who has been called – since his symbolic move, in 1970, from the restrictions of English institutionalised theatre to Paris and the demanding freedoms of his Centre International de Recherche Théâtrale – the greatest director this country hasn't got.

The journey is particularly easy if you happen to be the artistic director of our own National Theatre. Waterloo is just a step away from the South Bank and likewise, at the other end, it takes no time to walk from the Gare du Nord to the Bouffes du Nord, the wonderful old horse-shoe-shaped vaudeville house that – left more or less as he found it in all its peeling, dilapidated, glowing-red glory – is home to Peter Brook's productions.

Richard Eyre had made such a trip only the previous week, Brook tells me when we meet for a drink at the Café de Flores. He also reveals that it was a conversation with Eyre that threw up the germ of his present production, *Qui est là*, a fascinating mosaic-like mix of scenes from *Hamlet* and reflections on the nature of theatre, acting and direction, culled from the writings of Artaud, Brecht, Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Gordon Craig and the Noh master, Zeami. Theatre is a quintessentially collaborative art. It struck Brook as therefore something of a paradox that directors tend to operate in isolation from each other. So, about six years ago, he and Eyre "invited a group of directors of different ages to come together to see if we could have a free and intimate exchange about our problems and, as we left, he and I began to talk around this theme and I said that I had, at the back of my mind, the sense that it could be dramatised and Richard was very encouraging".

Brook's initial impulse was to do a play that concentrated on Vsevolod Meyerhold, the revolutionary Russian director and the founding member of the Moscow Art Theatre. "He is the first great hero of theatre: a hero and a martyr," declares Brook. "He is the theatre's Socrates," this last a reference to the fact that – after a career of brilliant experiment stretching from the days of Symbolist aestheticism to those of prescriptive socialist realism – Meyerhold was driven out by the talentless apparatchiks of the Stalin era and died,

a "non-person", either at the hands of an executioner or in a labour camp.

Brook rapidly saw, however, that when you contemplate the beginning of this century – when the modern idea of the director and the art of *mise en scène* were suddenly invented, in reaction to the bankrupt pictorialism and practices of the previous era – what is interesting is the emergence not of a single figure but of "a handful of super-talented visionaries possessed of that energy that comes from entering a new continent".

These men had, to put it mildly, their doctrinal disagreements and Brook is both amusing and sympathetic about "the natural, human tendency to believe in and defend one's own territory excessively. So Stanislavsky [with his emphasis on the actor's inner motivation and emotional memory] for a long time had to believe that his dear pupil Meyerhold was on the wrong track [with his view of acting as Pavlovian reflex]. And Meyerhold had to believe that his dear, much-respected father-figure, Stanislavsky, was also off the mark."

Matters veered into farce when Stanislavsky invited Gordon Craig, son of Ellen Terry and cousin of John Gielgud, to the Moscow Art Theatre to direct *Hamlet*. But then, that would have been hard to avoid, given that the one was a champion of the interior actor, the other of the actor as *Übermarionette* (super-puppet), one element in the total scenic design.

The crunch came, Brook recounts, at the final dress rehearsal. To create a sense of space as a fluid reflection of *Hamlet*'s subjective states, Craig had devised a system of mobile screens that could register shifts of locale and of consciousness and be brought into abstract, cubist patterns. Craig's idea was that these should be moved in full view by costumed stagehands, whereas Stanislavsky's naturalist instinct was to bring the curtain down at the end of every scene. At the final dress, though, the screen somehow came loose and toppled over like a pack of cards, the accident settling the argument in Stanislavsky's favour.

In *Qui est là*, Brook has avoided what he calls the "television approach" of batten-ing on dispute. The aim, rather, is to show that "these great visions of theatre are linked and complementary" and that, as he writes in a programme note, the theories aren't absolute truths established for all

time, but ideas to be used at strategic moments. Hence, these voices from the past are transmitted to us by the performers of the *Hamlet* scenes and they are left unidentified except as a list in the programme and to the extent that it's possible to guess that, for the most part, each actor has been assigned the words of one particular visionary. Artaud's reflections, for example, acquire a haunting authority when delivered by a young woman who is partly still in character as Ophelia and partly herself.

An absolute purity of focus has long been one of Brook's cardinal strengths as a director and this is matched by the extraordinary quality of attention he offers you as an interviewee. A small compact figure, now in his 71st year, he is a magnetic combination of intellectual precision and physical daintiness, his fingertips tracing in the air the contours of some fleetly articulated thought. After we'd watched him spellbinding the audience at a recent Empty Space Award ceremony, a fellow judge remarked to me that you felt like forsaking wife, children, worldly goods, the lot, and following him. It does him credit that he has not abused that power. As Irving Wardle has written, "The usual penalty for joining the entourage of a great director is that you turn into a courtier and your brain is taken away. But there are no tame house-scribes to be found among Brook's circle."

Like *The Man Who...* his Oliver Sacks-derived study of the human significance of neurological disorder, *Qui est là* is at once pellucid, playful, serious without solemnity, and rinsed clean of all redundancy.

The setting is a simple square of cream matting; the props are minimal: percussively punctuated by a lone instrumentalist, the production is light on its stocking feet. *Hamlet*, a play with a thespian troupe, an inset drama, and a profound preoccupation with what it means to "act" (the verb covering both real and simulated action), is well-equipped to function as the backbone of this "recherche théâtrale". Now in the thick of the drama, now outside it voicing or demonstrating an *aperçu* from the writings of the chosen directors, the cast of six make seamless transitions.

It's a key moment in *Hamlet* when the First Player performs the speech about Priam's slaughter and Hecuba's grief because it brings home to *Hamlet* a shaming irony. The professional actor is able to

work himself up to real tears in the service of a mere piece of fiction, whereas *Hamlet*, who has a real cause for passionate commitment, remains inactive. The way *Qui est là* treats the episode is typical of the whole enterprise. Firstly, by the time we get to this point, we have already heard two divergent comments on producing stage tears. There's the "biomechanical" approach of Meyerhold, who illustrates his theory with the formula "I see a bear, I'm afraid, I tremble. No, that's not it. I see a bear. I tremble. I'm afraid. We are machines." And there's the "emotional memory" method of Stanislavsky, who confesses that a street accident he recently witnessed involving the death of an old man would be of less use to him in summoning up stage tears than the recollection, from much further back, of seeing a little monkey dead on the pavement.

It's characteristic, too, that the Player King's speech is performed in a mixture of his native language and ancient Greek by a Japanese actor, Yoshi Oida. This is partly for pragmatic reasons: in the original and in European translations, the speech sounds ridiculously dated and bombastic. But the casting and the invoking here of a non-Western theatre tradition and rhetorical style are deeply in accord with the philosophy of Brook's international centre. The aim there has always been not a melting-pot synthesis but a valuing and harnessing of cultural differences purified of cliché. For Brook, the policy has clear benefits in making Shakespeare convincing for a contemporary audience.

This you don't achieve, he argues, by bringing on machine guns and all the paraphernalia of the modern world. Instead, you create a situation where there seems to be no barrier of belief between the actor and his lines. Take the problem of the Ghost in *Hamlet*. If you have two African actors (Bakary Sangare and Sotigui Kouyaté) playing the hero and his father, the cultural awkwardness of crediting an after-life disappears. There's an extraordinary physical tenderness here between Sangare's *Hamlet* and Kouyaté's Ghost, who appears as a palpable body rather than a spirit and whose continued existence is accepted as quite natural.

The five directors whose voices resonate in the piece were all, says Brook, "Europeans who, at some point in their lives, received the shock of the Oriental theatre.

The one thing they were not exposed to was what the African can bring..." These are the great thinkers who have influenced Brook's practice (Artaud, for example, lay behind the Theatre of Cruelty season in the Sixties; the historic white-box-and-trapeze *Midsummer Night's Dream* was described as Meyerholdian). Movingly but quite unpretentiously, the piece feels like the résumé of a century of theatrical endeavour and of Brook's own continually questing art.

*Qui est là* offers, it's true, a very truncated *Hamlet*, which climaxes not with the duel and the poisonings but with the hero's "readiness is all" speech. It's typical that Brook – whose radically telescoped and reshaped *Carmen* aimed "to unearth the little jewel lost, thanks to the dictates of the Opéra-Comique, in an old warhorse" – should think of *Hamlet* as existing on two distinct levels of achievement. For him, the spiritual journey is complete by the graveyard scene. The final stretch he dismisses as "the Tarantino version", a reverting to the melodrama values of the commercial potboiler on which the play was based. For French audiences, unfamiliar with the tragedy, he needed to keep a thread of narrative continuity, but when, as he plans, he develops the piece for an English-speaking public, he will be free to use *Hamlet* much more impressionistically.

Once completed, the English version will be seen at the National Theatre. Brook offers an interesting angle on the question of the succession there. Of Daldry and Mendes, he says that "to have to run three theatres isn't right for a young person. I think it would stultify them." Trevor Nunn's appointment has been met in the press with a certain amount of grudging comment, the implication being that, by directing Andrew Lloyd Webber, Nunn has touched pitch and could never present a clean enough pair of hands. If anyone has the moral right to take such a lofty position, it is Brook, whose career has been an object lesson in the avoidance of commercial compromise and of the temptations that beset a director in mid-life (megamusicals or monasticism; cynicism or whining). His reaction to the news, however, is one of delight. He points to the richness of Nunn's experience in so many different forms of theatre, his generosity, vigour, imagination and openness. "I think he will be marvellous. Absolutely. I can't think of anyone better."





The thing about...  
Mother's Day  
0

# Happiness is a steak and kidney pie

In Germany, the locals are joining homesick natives in British speciality food stores. By Klaus Smolka



Hayley's British Shop: the ketchup is just "a little more tomato-ish"

Such, runs the old joke, is hell: the car-drivers are French, Germans run the Ministry of Fun, Americans are in charge of the arts, Italians organise the whole show. Oh, and the chefs are British.

Any comment by a German on British cuisine is likely to start off with some calumny of this sort. Yet while Germans may pour scorn, like gravy, on typically British dishes, the contempt runs both ways.

Many of the 115,000 British expatriates in Germany go out of their way to escape Eisbein und Sauerkraut - and they have around 30 culinary havens to fall back on - shops offering food from Britain.

Hayley's British Shop is one of two such speciality shops in Frankfurt, the city with the largest British community in Germany. The store is run by Hayley Wood, a 26-year-old from North Wales. It has a good position in the Frankfurt West End, an upmarket district rather like the City of London, packed with banks, computer companies, estate agents and consultants. About half of the customers in her shop are British, says Hayley. Most of the others are American or German.

Among the regular customers are Steve Walton and Colin Booth, two construction workers from London, who have been living in Frankfurt for a number of years. Their shopping bags often contain the odd can

of John Smith's Bitter - a weird brew, too flat and insipid by most German standards. "German beer is the best beer in the world," says Steve, "but, well, sometimes the real thing from back home does a lot more to cheer you up."

For Steve and Colin, the steak and kidney pies in Hayley's shop are particular favourites. This is the sort of food you cannot find in most German supermarkets - to German taste buds such pies epitomise the worst of British cuisine.

Steve and Colin also come to Hayley's shop to stock up on products that may be available on the Continent but that "just aren't the same" as the goods imported from Britain. According to the two Britons, the ketchup on Hayley's shelves is "a little more tomato-ish", the mayonnaise "more mustardy", the cereals more crunchy. Even the same product of the same brand tastes different when not imported from Britain, they say.

This refined sense of taste is not entirely imagined. A spokesman of an American company that produces ketchup confirms that although there is one single basic recipe for their ketchup, the ingredients and the processing do indeed vary "to a minor extent" in the individual countries in which the ketchup is produced.

But Hayley concedes that many customers are probably driven by the force of habit. The

white bread they're after has just got to be Mother's Pride. To meet the demands of her customers she has her food products delivered from a wholesaler in Folkestone every Monday.

Some locals now seem to be warming to the notion of food from the other side of the Channel. British food is becoming more popular, says Roy Edleston, managing director of the Frankfurt-based German office of Food from Britain, which promotes food exports from the UK.

"It is true, for a long time we have had to struggle with a fish-and-chips image on the Continent," says Mr Edleston. "And in Germany and Britain eating and drinking is often considered more of a necessity than something to take pleasure in - unlike in Latin countries."

But the range of British food products in Germany is no longer restricted to classics such as whisky, gin and marmalades. Britain has outstanding natural produce to offer, which is then processed in Germany, says Mr Edleston - crustaceans from the Welsh coast, game and cheeses from the north of England, poultry from East Anglia, or milk from the West Country.

Mr Edleston reels off the facts and figures to support his claim: Germany is the third most important market for the British food industry (after France and Ireland); some £670m worth of food products

were exported to Germany in 1994 - 4 per cent more on the previous year; exports to Germany accounted for 5 per cent of total food exports from Britain.

But while Germans may have developed a liking for British ingredients, are they ever going to take to what they regard as a very peculiar way of processing this food? In the English Shop, Frankfurt's other outlet for British speciality products, German customers are still rare.

"They account for 3 per cent of my clientele," says shop-owner Gunther Bentz, who is himself German. Four out of five customers are British or Irish. Herr Bentz's assortment boasts some 700 British food products, delivered from London and Kent. Herr Bentz has adapted quickly to cater for British demands on special occasions: before Easter, the shelves groan with Easter eggs of a vastness unknown to Germans; and at Christmas the place is packed with plum puddings.

It is particularly during the festive holidays that many expatriates turn to food to remind them of home. Something that is not lost on Hayley Wood: a tin of baked beans, or a jar of orange marmalade may not be the prescribed cure for homesickness, but, a visit to Hayley's British Shop is, she says, "the next best thing to being in Britain".

## British food in Italy...

Whatever they might say about the four-cheese joys of pasta and ice cream, most Brits living in Italy have a guilty secret lurking at the base of their food consciousness: a packet of marmalade, perhaps, or a pot of jam. Often, these are gifts brought over by visiting aunts, but many are concerned about the lack of such delicacies in the local diet. With a bit of searching, though, one can find such tastes of home tucked away in specialist shops. In Rome the big macca is Castroni, an international delicatessen just north of the Vatican where you can find all the old favourites - Fortnum & Mason marmalade, Bird's Eye custard, Branston pickle, Woodpecker jam, and much more. A 100g packet of Jammy's Earl Grey tea costs £5.00 (the about £2.50), a pot of marmalade about the same, while Marmite is a real delicacy at £28.00 for 250g. When you're in Italian barmen, dropping tea bags into lukewarm water, need for fraste, a delightful cafe and tea shop on Via della Lungaretta in Trastevere. English teas are harder to track down, although a small delicatessen on Via della Croce, near the Spanish steps, will sell you farmhouse Cheddar for £1.99 and a bag. Starter to head for Il Baccaro, a delightful restaurant in Piazza degli Spagnoli near Piazza Navona, where the original pasta dishes include one made with Brussels sprouts and blue Stilton.

Andrew Gumbel

## ...and France

The stronghold of British life in Paris is Marks & Spencer. English women living here, me among them, make straight for the sausage and bacon counter, relieved that it's easy to buy such a familiar dinner. And it means that next weekend's guests will not be asked to induce country pork pies in their luggage: not that these guests would wish to eat them - a number of anguished visitors have reluctantly swallowed pork pie and coleslaw with us, clearly yearning for a French plat du jour.

The occasional M&S Indian dinner makes most expats feel very nostalgic for all those possibilities of take-away curries. Drinks party snacks, such as chips and crisps, are popular with the English in France, too. Whipping and double cream cater for truly English recipes. Tea becomes properly English with Fruits Shortcake Slices, scones and Chocolate Mini Rolls. More than anything, though, it's the puddings that draw the English resident. Fruit crumble at 17F is excellent value compared to a patisserie's exquisite but tiny cake. Most of all, you are tempted by cooking jam tarts - although deliveries of these are erratic. On one occasion, I missed the last roll-poly on the shelf, my precious find secreted into someone else's basket. I expressed some surprise that such an elegantly dressed lady should have such a sweet tooth. She smiled this staunchly but the haste with which she fled, leaving her change behind, suggested that she was not entirely speaking the truth.

Isabella Palmer



## Good thing

Greenwich Herb and Spice Company Dip-Mix, £2.50

Packs of flavoured dips are all very well but what happens when your pot of Mexican chilli dip outlives your tortillas? Most likely it will languish in the fridge until well past its sell-by date. But an end to all that tragic waste is at hand. The Greenwich Herb and Spice Company have the solution: little bags of herbs ready to add to anything, from the smallest dollop of mayo for a sandwich, to a vat of crème fraîche for a marinade. Choose from Garlic & Herb, Lemon & Dill, Mint & Coriander, Mexican Tomato, Chilli, Curry, Mustard and Horseradish.

Greenwich Herb and Spice Company, Units 8 & 9 Enington Park Business Centre, Aldermuster, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire. CV37 5BT. Tel 01789 450445 for mail order details.

## Mad thing

Bath Time Treats by Zarvis, £25.00

Zarvis's bath kits look rather like a beginners guide to voodoo, but will guarantee the bath-time equivalent of a stiff drink for Mother's Day. The enticing Pandora's Box and the highly sexed Vice Box (which comes with the warning "For Baths Only") contain packets of leaves, little bottles of oil, aphrodisiac sticks, scrolls of cedarwood and chunks of lava stone, all nestling on a bed of alarmingly hair-like packaging.

Liberty, Tel 0171-734 1234 for mail order or details of your nearest store.

## Checkout

Rococo Chocolates, 321 King's Road, London SW3 5EP (0171-352 5857)

What is it? A mecca for serious chocolate lovers. The shop was set up by Chantal Cody, founder member of the Chocolate Society.

Who shops here? Those who really know their Grand Cru Manjari from their Grand Cru Guanaja (both blends of rare cocoa beans), and passers by who are drawn in by spectacular window displays.

What should I buy? Wonderful bunches of chocolate asparagus (£7.50) and chocolate cigars (£3.50). For Easter there are chocolate hens (£6.75) and hares (£5.25), and a huge selection of bird eggs - choose from partridge, hedge sparrow, robin and woodcock. Best sellers are their mint wafers (£6.75 a box). At the cheaper end there are chocolate champagne corks (40p) and sardines (35p). Make sure you get one of their lovely blue and white carrier bags to take your booty home in.

## Rococo



## AUCTIONS

Will the young artists work evolve or will they get fed up with painting and become dentists?

Next week: London's spring contemporary art sales. The market for contemporary art is recovering and the rich are getting richer. Only the rich can afford the safest investments that are at the very top of the market - blue-chip names such as the Italians Fontana and Poliakoff, whose established reputations are pushing their prices steadily upwards.

The fat-cat collectors' hunch is that the same big names that crested the late Eighties boom will lead the way out of the recession. A Fontana slashed canvas or a blocky Poliakoff abstract composition that would have fetched a whopping £300,000 in the boom years 1988-89 can be snapped up for a third of that today - and in a

rising market. At Christie's last November, Poliakoff's *Composition - Jaune, Bleu et Rouge* (1954) fetched £194,000 - the highest price for the artist for five years. There are two Poliakoff abstract compositions in oils at Christie's on Tuesday (2.30pm) estimated £40,000-£60,000 and £60,000-£80,000. Sotheby's, Thursday (10.30am), has two more affordable Poliakoff abstracts: a 1945 water-colour pastel (25in by 19in) est £2,000-£3,000 and a late gouache of the same size est £8,000-£10,000. Fontana's auction prices, hitherto dependent upon fluctuating Italian buying power, have been picking up since last year's exhibition Italian Metamorphosis at the Guggenheim in New York. It caught the attention of rich

American collectors. They have brought their own imitable aesthetic to bear upon Fontana's monochrome slashed canvases: pillar box red sells best, followed by blue, white and green - with gold in a top category all its own. Very symbolic. Wealth, see? Preferences for the other colours have probably been prompted by interior decorators.

You need to be quite well heeled to afford even the cheaper, less safe contemporary artists - the slapdash hotshots of the Eighties: German and Italian neo-Expressionists mostly still in their thirties. It costs £6,000-£12,000 to invest in a young German - Fetting, Middendorf, Penck - or £10,000-£20,000 for a young Italian such as Paladino, Chia,

Clemente. Are their reputations worth a flutter? Will their work evolve, or will they get fed up with painting and become dentists or shoe salesmen? You just cannot trust the younger generation, these days.

The modern Brit market shows the same trend: big, safe - even dull - names are leading the recovery. Last November's main sale of the year, at Christie's, saw ultra-trad Munnings's *Shrimp and the White Pony*, modestly estimated £40,000-£60,000, sell for £205,000. Another Munnings, of the de Beauvoir hounds, estimated £30,000-£50,000, made £102,700. Four others sold well above estimate. This Thursday (11am), Christie's has an unusual Munnings (no horses) of haymaking on the

Stour, estimated £30,000-£50,000.

The same sale has some 40 paintings and drawings by Augustus John and his sister Gwen, from the private collection of Philadelphia socialites Edgar and Helen Hope Montgomery Scott, upon whom the film "High Society" was based. These fresh-to-market works will either revive the patchy John market or bury it. Plenty of Lowries in this first sale since the announcement of £75m of lottery funds for a Lowry gallery in Salford. Those clogs are becoming very blue chip. Sotheby's has a sale of Impressionists and moderns, Wednesday (10.30am).

John Windsor

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# The ridiculous thing about ducks

The British are obsessed by them, the Americans pay up to £250,000 for them. Clive Fewins on the rise and rise of the decoy duck

Ducks poke their multi-coloured heads out of unexpected corners in every room of Sophie Ridges' stone cottage on the edge of the Mendip Hills in Somerset. The ducks are of the carved, wooden variety: "investment quality decorative decoys" as Mrs Ridges calls them.

They are made in small numbers by carvers in this country and on the other side of the Atlantic. Mrs Ridges, 52, says the gallery at her home in the village of Farrington Gurney (where she also runs wood carving courses) is the only one in the UK devoted specifically to wooden ducks.

The record price for a decorative carved wooden duck decoy at auction in the USA is \$319,000 (about £250,000) but none of the specimens at Mrs Ridges' gallery costs as much as that. She does, though, have a number on sale at more than £1,000, and a handful that she would not part with for any sum.

The most valuable are American and date from the late 1800s or the early years of this century. They are hollow in the centre, with a keel attached to the base to make them float and are regarded as "authentic" decoys.

These working models had to be durable, realistic and cheap to carve. They were not, therefore, things of great artistic merit. Frequently they were roughly shaped with an axe from a single block of wood. These crude early American decoy ducks can fetch four figures - although there is far less work in them than in the more sophisticated modern carved wooden ducks.

The wholesale slaughter of wildfowl in the USA eventually caused trouble. A number of species of duck became scarce and the Labrador duck became extinct. Eventually, in 1918, Congress passed the Migratory Bird Act and this effectively put an end to market hunting. Many of the hunters turned to other ways of making a living and this gave rise to decoy carving as an art form.

In this country, decoy carving has grown in popularity over the last 15 years. Mrs Ridges finds an increasing number of redundant and early retired people coming on the courses that she runs about six times a year, both at her home and at centres belonging to The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

"If you wish to take up woodcarving then ducks are good things to start on because they are flat and have no legs," she explains. "Apart from being difficult to carve, legs are delicate things that often break."

"Ducks have a great appeal to the British sense of the ridiculous and they are also things of great charm and beauty. A duck carving is a comforting thing to have in the home."

There are an estimated 500-600 decoy duck carvers in the UK and they have their own association. Some of the best are women, and several of these were trained by Mrs Ridges' husband, Bob, a former master mariner who took up carving decoys as a pastime and became the acknowledged master of the art in this country until his death in 1989.

Judith Nicoll, 50, of Westcliff-on-Sea in Essex, who runs a show devoted to bird carvings in September each year at



At home in the Mendip Hills, Sophie Ridges and her decoy ducks

Photograph: John Lawrence

Penthorpe Waterfowl Park, Fakenham in Norfolk learnt on a Bob Ridges course and perfected her art on several courses in the USA.

"Last year the event drew enthusiasts from all over the country and sold half of the 350 carvings on show for a total of £23,000," said Mrs Nicoll.

Although they sell their work widely in galleries and at shows a number of full-time decoy carvers also sell direct. Ted Oxley of Thorpe Bay near Southend has carved since the age of 16 but only took up bird carving full time when he retired from his job as a dental technician last year. He specialises in decoy ducks and usually uses Jelutong - the wood of the "chewing gum

tree" from Malaysia - and English lime, as these woods allow very fine feathered work. A duck can take Mr Oxley two solid months or more to make. Last year, at the annual summer show and competition held by the British Decoy and Wildfowl Carvers Association Mr Oxley won the Best in Show award. Prices average £120 to £1350.

Another of the better-known duck carvers is Guy Iapin, whose flotsam-river workshop sits on the banks of the River Colne at Wivenhoe on the edge of the Essex marshes. Most of his work is abstract, the ducks being highly stylised. "They are usually just shapes, with no detailed work" he said. "They

sell in the galleries at an average price of £2,000-4,000, though once I sold a big flight on a large base for £10,000."

The styles vary from intricate "feathered" realistic as Sophie Ridges likes to say: "My late husband used to tell his pupils: 'Inside every block of wood is a duck. We carvers delight in setting them free.'"

The Decoy Art Studio and Gallery, Hollow Marsh, Farrington Gurney, Avon BS 18 5TX (01761 452075).

The British Decoy and Wildfowl Carvers Association, 6 Pendred Road, Reading, Berks RG2 8QL (01734 311867).

A life in the shift of...  
Thelma Howard, 25, manageress, The Joke Shop, Margate

"Mum and Dad bought the shop 26 years ago. Mum ran away from art college to join a fair, met Dad and they settled down in Margate. They bought this shop and the shell shop next door. They divorced. Dad got the shells, Mum got the jokes. Jim, the other assistant, and I have worked here since we left school at 16. I work seven days a week."

In the morning I put stock away and generally tidy up the mayhem from the day before. Every month we get a new delivery of jokes. We've just had new plastic dog turds. It is brilliant. It feels rubbery and you can throw it and it sticks to people."

I love it when you feel you've really helped someone. One lady, who thought her son was nicking money from her handbag, bought a small detonator. He opened the bag and it exploded in his face. She was very pleased with that."

Lads like anything that smells revolting and makes a loud bang. Girls are more into joke cigarettes and soap which turns your face black. We get small kids who've been told off by their parents and who want to make mischief and get revenge and I think, 'yeah, go for it'."

There's nothing I really hate about my job. Sometimes, if I have a coach-load of old ladies in the back looking at all the sexy stuff and they're screaming with laughter, I think this is one of the best jobs in the world."

Sally Williams

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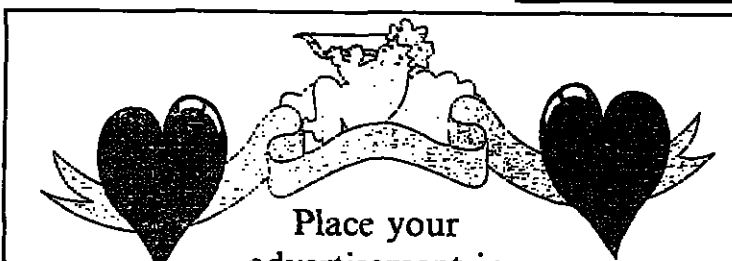
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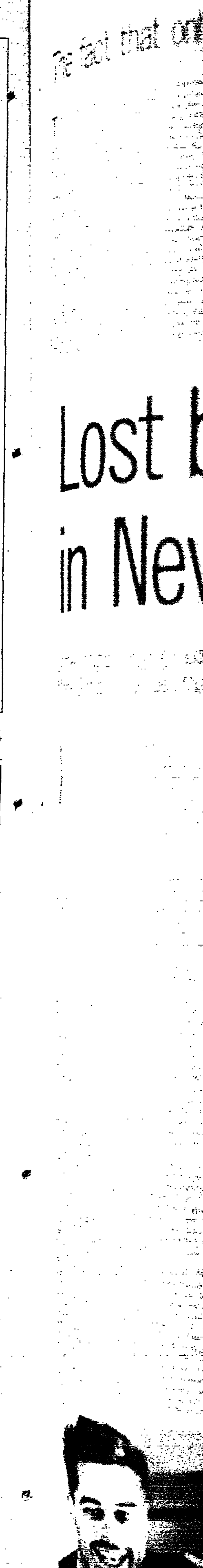
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## The fact that only subscribers can watch the Big Fight shows that today's choice is no choice

Two unrelated items in this newspaper caught my eye earlier this week. One was an advert for tonight's heavily promoted Bruno vs Tyson world championship boxing match, the other was the news that Sketchley, the well-known dry-cleaners, is to close hundreds of its high-street outlets and set up shop instead in the vast fluorescent-lit sheds of one of the inexorably expanding edge-of-town superstore chains.

By the end of the week, these two events had become inextricably linked in my mind, for, in their own ways, both represent contradictory aspects of the fetish of consumer choice that has warped the British body-cultural over the past 15 years.

The promise of successive Conservative governments since Mrs Thatcher was first elected to office in 1979 has been that of a form of

economic liberalism that would somehow bestow upon every citizen the right to choose the way they wished to order their lives. By invoking the free-market spirit of Adam Smith, some form of vote-catching, Mystic Maghocus-pocus would, very soon, have us all conjuring our very own homes, schools, hospitals, trains, buses, gas and electricity.

Citizens, or "customers" as they were now increasingly known, of free-enterprise Britain were to benefit from boundless choice: the nation would be turned into one giant supermarket and we customers, sporting in the sunlit uplands of a new-found-land of mortgages, school fees and shares in what were once public utilities, would pursue the high life, indulging in a boundless cornucopia of goods and services. No longer would nannying state com-

missars tell us what we could or could not have, or what was good for us and what was not.

In future, when we turned on the television, we would have a choice of a dozen channels with the promise of many more to come. Standing at a London bus-stop we would choose between green, day-glo and buses the colour of Refresher packets: no more tyranny of the standardised red double-decker (note the dictatorial, Communist-inspired colour) for us.

At railway stations we would deliberately miss the 10 o'clock Tesco express (don't miss the on-board shopping facility), so that we could catch the following 10.30am Heineken flyer, the train that reaches parts of Britain no other train can reach (customers, joining at the Paddington station shop, please note the pub car situated



JONATHAN GLANCEY

towards the centre of the train). By the year 2000 (when parliament is to be privatised and every MP sponsored by a company: nothing new there), everything we eat, breathe, buy, use and wear could well be put out to tender. How about a choice of lip-smacking tapewaters (including your choice of Cedric Brown's, the senior citizens' favourite with natural gas, and Frank Bruno's Old Time sparmint 'n' prawn cocktail flavoured) brought to us by rival companies. Is all this nonsense? Yes, but so is the new culture of choice. We

may have more television channels than ever before, but, if you want to watch Frank Bruno and Mike Tyson knocking the testosterone out of one another tonight, you will have to be a subscriber to Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV and pay an extra £14.95 on top of your subscription for the privilege. You cannot see the Big Fight if you do not. In the bad old days of the choice-free Gestapo state, Frank and Mike would have been slugging it out on BBC or ITV and anyone could have watched for the cost of their annual TV licence.

Recently, Murdoch tried to buy the television rights for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. If he had succeeded and if you had wanted to take part (from the comfort of the living-room sofa while tucking into your choice of take-away pizza, burger or sushi), you would have had to buy into Murdoch's empire

and attach one of those disfiguring satellite dishes to the side of your house. The fact that only Sky subscribers can watch tonight's Big Fight proves that today's choice is no choice.

The same is true of this week's news from Sketchley: in moving their dry-cleaning outlets to banal superstores on the edge of town, they are part of a conspiracy to force us into the jaws of these retail dinosaurs. There are people who claim to prefer superstores to street markets and high-street shopping parades. They remain, for me at least, an enigma. Quite why anyone would prefer a perspiring continental-style lettuce shrink-wrapped in plastic when fresh green leaves are for sale at lower prices from robust market stalls is quite beyond me (beyond our European neighbours, too). The superstore may well offer a

galactic choice of cheeses air-freighted from exotic parts and pre-washed fruits of paradise from the South Seas, but what choice does it offer those who either cannot get to out-of-town supermarkets or want to shop in the very market towns and high streets they serve to destroy?

If I cannot have my clothes dry-cleaned in the high street, I am pressured into joining the superstore set; because I think superstore culture is damaging our national culture I will refuse, but my choice will mean having a wardrobe of grubby clothes.

Perhaps it is time for us to choose to fight the *faux* culture of choice. After all, what have we got to lose? Only our satellite dishes, shrink-wrapped ugly fruit and 15 years of demeaning political dogma.

Thomas Sutcliffe returns next week

## Lost boys stuck in Neverland

Something's bugging modern man. He's confused, he's irresponsible, he's immature. Mark Simpson argues that our culture offers boys no inducement to grow up

In his next movie, major box-office draw Robin Williams is to play a boy with an accelerated ageing disease. For an actor who began his ascent to fame playing the childish half alien *Mork* in *Mork and Mindy*, and has since been a 40-year-old Peter Pan in *Hook* and a boy imprisoned inside a board-game for 30 years in *Jumanji*, this latest boy-trapped-in-a-man's-body role is entirely predictable and entirely in character. More surprising, perhaps, is the news that more men are finding themselves playing Robin Williams.

In a post-feminist, consumerist age in which being a man is an uncertain business of uncertain worth, Peter Pan-itis, a condition where grown men behave as if they had never grown up at all, has become a benign evolutionary adaptation, filling the world with men whose bodies have passed through puberty but whose minds clearly have not.

Hollywood, naturally, has been riddled with it for some time. All the biggest male stars are textbook examples. In addition to the juvenile antics of Robin, there's Arnie, the middle-aged man with the boyish grin, obsessed with body building and big guns, who, along with his buddy Sly, does his best to promote permanent adolescence as a lifestyle. Then there's Keanu and Brad, the boy-men who don't look as if they've started shaving yet (Brad's goatee looks as unconvincing as Burt Reynolds's hair). Meanwhile, at the back of the class, there's Jim Carrey putting string up his nose and pulling it out of his mouth, and tongue-tied, bashful Hugh Grant, whose *ménage à trois* with Divine Brown and the LAPD was so funny because it was so unlikely (unless you happen to know any British public schoolboys).

That other mass medium – pop music – must bear a great deal of the responsibility for spreading Peter Pan-itis. Beginning by worshipping youth and turning it into the commodity of the late-20th century, it has ended up by popularising the charts with ghoulishly mummified spectres like Mick Jagger and Cliff Richard, performers who became stars when they were young but now employ all the technology that royalties can buy to slow the maturation process.

This is not to mention the self-styled "Peter Pan of Pop" himself – Michael Jackson, the child-star who resolutely never grew up, made himself an orphan by becoming his own special creation, and who dubbed his ranch full of fairground rides and exotic animals Neverland. However, the global triumph of Peter Pan-itis seems to have had a peculiar effect on British pop and the new batch of young(ish) acts. The only way to get attention in British pop these days, apparently, is to be derivative and deferential to your ancestors. Bands like Blur and Oasis sound like Q readers singing karaoke. Paradoxically, in a world where boyishness is now preferred to

manliness everywhere, Britpop seems to have decided that the best way to avoid becoming your Dad these days is to impersonate his heroes.

The continued success of boy bands and the Biblical proportions of the deluge of grief from women of all ages which greeted the demise of Take That – a band that was rapidly becoming less and less "boy" and more and more "mutton dressed as boy" – illustrate the enormous marketability of boyishness and how attached women have become to young men who seem only too willing to portray themselves as eunuchs refusing manhood in the service of keeping women happy.

But as evidence of how far things have gone, Peter Pan-itis has even infected the world of business. The Microsoft Corporation is looked to as a sort of template for the future, and its managing director, Bill Gates, is lauded as a culture / economic guru. The oft-told narrative of Microsoft's slaying of the IBM Goliath is also the story of how manhood has been vanquished. The sensitive boys who refused to come out of their bedroom and "mix it" with the other boys, building instead a womb-like world of computers and cyberspace to hide in, have been vindicated by the alienating and infantilising effect of technology and media on us all. The geeks have indeed finally inherited the Earth.

In fact, consumer culture has built a Neverland for us all to inhabit. Those who refuse to dwell there are at best deemed anti-social. Now, when I become a man and put away childish things, I put thousands out of work. Consumer culture has a great deal invested in keeping men immature. The search for pleasure and new experiences, which is an essential part of consumerism, is irreconcilable with the stoicism, self-sacrifice and instinctive distrust of novelty associated with traditional models of manhood. Real men don't eat quiche, the saying goes. Well, we don't need real men any more, replies consumer capitalism in general, and quiche manufacturers in particular.

Moreover, as productive practices change, and part-time / temporary work becomes the norm, the man who laboured five days a week all his working life to bring home the bacon for his family is fast becoming extinct. Changing reproductive practices, meanwhile, are phasing out traditional manhood too – more families are being raised without fathers. Since we remain basically childish until we take responsibility for another life, this is, in turn, likely to produce more Lost Boys.

This certainly appears to be the view of Robert Bly, author of *Iron John*, the American men's movement's central text. He argues that boys don't grow into men anymore because they have lost the institutions of fatherhood that initiated them into manhood. "Misguided feminism", which fails to distinguish between masculinity and patriarchy, and "Pied Piper" popular culture have trapped males in basically juvenile behaviour.

Whatever the truth of this, it certainly seems that even in politics, a world traditionally dominated by Big Daddies, the Peter Pans have taken over. Today, the The Most Powerful Man in the World is a baby-boomer from a broken home, who, despite his grey hair and all the pomp of office, still seems to be the chubby boy photographed eagerly shaking hands with President Kennedy (or even the fat boy who played the tuba at High School, as PJ O'Rourke put it). His arch-enemy, Newt Gingrich, also from a broken home, displays the same boyish eagerness, albeit with a barmy streak of egomania. On this side

of the pond, meanwhile, the future appears to belong to Tony Blair, a man who looks and sounds like every granny's favourite grandson – the library monitor in the Christian Union with a university scholarship lined up.

And in everyday British life, the males who appear to be in the ascendant are those who appear to have renounced the onerous duties of manhood, whatever they might be these days, and opted instead for the mischievousness of boyhood. Nothing symbolises this better than the runaway success of "lad" culture.

Originally a reaction against the goody-goody image of the New Man, who was portrayed as a nappy-changing "feminist" chap, New Lad celebrated naughtiness and irresponsibility. Not for nothing was the phenomenally successful new men's magazine *Lad* sub-titled "For Men Who Should Know Better". New Lad is and was a purely adolescent idea of masculinity, but one aimed at adult men. In the world according to New Lad, football, beer and babes – the signs of masculinity for a 12-year-old boy – became the measure of all things.

The New Lad version of Peter Pan-itis fed on the class division of British society, which had designated working-class males "lads" rather than fully formed men with fully formed responsibilities, and yet also bestowed on the class that worked by hand rather than brain the claim to a more "authentic" masculinity, which middle-class "ponces" like David Baddiel attached to themselves by becoming New Lads. It was also in working-class culture that the habit of culling your wife "Mum" was most pronounced, as was the Andy Capp stereotype of the irresponsible hubby who escapes his bruiser spouse by going boozing. Implicit in the New Lad view of the universe, for all its apparent celebration of masculinity and denigration of women, is the acceptance of the idea that woman – or "Mum" – rules the world.

Neverland is booming as males are taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the current "crisis of masculinity" to come out of the toy-closet and declare themselves a boy trapped in a man's body. But this new-found freedom for men leaves women as full-time child-carers. Do women really want to spend their lives alternating between Mrs Capp and Wendy?

"I don't want to be a man, Wendy Mother, if I was to wake up and feel there was a beard!" "Peter," said Wendy the comforter, "I should love you in a beard"; and Mrs Darling stretched out her arms to him, but he repulsed her. "Keep back, lady – nobody is going to catch me and make me a man!"

Mark Simpson is the author of *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity* published by Cassell, and *It's a Queer World* published by Vintage in April at £8.99



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Geeks inheriting the earth: (clockwise from top) chubby eager Bill Clinton (Photo: AP); Take That and totemic babe; ultra-geek Bill Gates of corporate giant-slaying fame (Photo: AP); and Hollywood boy-man Brad Pitt, on the brink of his first shave





# arts reviews

## TELEVISION

### A Bloody Art (BBC2)

Is subscription viewing a blow to safer boxing? Jasper Rees on a tricky question

The trouble with boxing is that you can never believe what people say about it. The infuriated romantics who write about it, the helium-blended hype-merchants who promote it and the lobbyists who seek to ban it each have their own agenda, but all are equally guilty of misrepresentation. Only boxers themselves, for the most part tongue-tied but clear-eyed, have the honesty to call it the hurt business, a Mephistophelean deal that brings pain and pay.

With all hope abandoned of ever again broadcasting the likes of tonight's big fight, the BBC are now free to join the ranks of those who can say what they like about boxing. And although there might be a twist of sour grapes in any documentary that has to rent out its action clips from 'Doc' boxers, the BSKyB video library, John Rodda's *A Bloody Art* proved that it is possible to get within striking distance of calm objectivity.

Like a lot of sports reporters pushing retirement age, the *Guardian's* former fight writer is a fervent nostalgist, in mourning not only for sport's bygone innocence but also, perhaps, for the journalist's more pivotal role before the spread of television. But there is a pragmatic undertow to the mournful reminiscing of boxing's ancients. Rodda argued that if the sport's fatal attraction for lucre plays any further into the hands of the abolitionists, memories may well be all that's left of boxing.

The equation is simple - subscription viewers want entertainment for their money, which means knockouts, which raise the toll of death and brain damage. Fighters are trained nowadays, like police dogs, solely in techniques of attack, because the subtler skills of evasion that once kept nimble boxers on their feet no longer pay the bills. It makes sense that the traditional doctrine of duck-and-weave holds sway only in the amateur ring. With no money at stake, no one bays for blood.

Aside from suggesting a few rule changes to muzzle the potency of the puncher, Rodda seemed resigned to the fact that boxing will never stem the tide of changes wrought by the temptress television. It's no coincidence that boxing was the first sport to hurt itself into the ravenous maw of satellite, no surprise that there was no place for boxing on Parliament's list of shielded sporting events. You can't safeguard a home on terrestrial television for a sport with no annual niche in the sporting diary, nor anything as basic as a united governing body. WBO, WBA and IBF sound like competing ad agencies, and practically are.

For anyone with an eye on the calendar, Rodda's gloomy forecast of storms ahead for the hurt business was, on two counts, a wry bit of scheduling. It went out on the eve of another thespian night for the sport, in which the daffily costumed participants resemble actors in a sort of blood theatre. The transmission date also happened to be the *Ides of March*, summoning a vision of all those boxers stabbing Harry Carpenter in the back. *Et tu, Bruno?*

## THEATRE The Undertaking, Albany Theatre, London

Philip Osment's tangled web of recrimination in the wake of an Aids death is under-directed, under-edited and under-achieving. By Paul Taylor



Brotherly love and hate: Gary Liburn and Liam Halligan as straight Patrick and gay Michael

Photograph: Stuart Morris

*The Undertaking*, a new play by Philip Osment, concludes with campily costumed obsequial rites. A group of his close (and not so close) friends form a line by the edge of a cliff on a remote island off the Irish coast and, to the strains of a Mahler tape, toss the ashes of Henry, a gay man who has died of Aids, in the direction of America. There is no wind that day, so the deceased, while on their minds and lips, does not end up in their hair and eyes. That's a rare stroke of luck for, up to this point, their mourning has not been granted room for much dignity.

If this were a TV movie, Henry's estranged mother and his one surviving gay lover would meet and, after a frosty, tense start, progress through a course of mutual understanding that would leave them both with higher diplomas in emotional maturity. *The Undertaking* is at a far remove from such a formula. Henry's relations are barely mentioned, and in so far as this ensemble play can be said to have a central character, it's Michael (Liam Halligan), an ex-lover who now lives in a sexless sort-of-marriage to their joint friend, Sheila (Patricia Ede).

Michael flunked out of taking any responsibility for Henry during his final illness, though this did not stop him from picking up Eamon (John-Lloyd Stephens), the young, black male nurse who was in attendance. Peevish at the presence of this camp hunk on their expedition, Henry's last (now HIV positive) lover, Howard (Derek Howard), also suspects that Sheila exercised her influence on the dying man to make Michael his main beneficiary.

Osment's last two plays (*The Dearly Beloved* and *What I Did*

in the *Holidays*) have prompted comparisons with Chekhov for their ability to orchestrate group scenes where everyone is pulling in contrary directions, and for their sharp but unjudgemental eye for the tragicomic of human behaviour. *The Undertaking*, though, has the feel of something that should have been pushed through further drafts. A tell-tale sign is that Osment, instead of plunging straight to the heart of the story, doodles at the outset with needless scenes of desultory preparation for the trip. The dialogue establishing the tangled web of relationships and the complicated biographical background sounds like something that has been written as much for the author's benefit as ours; neither the script nor James Neale-Kennerley's under-directed production gives the characters enough to do during this part.

There's one very funny outdoor scene in the second half where all the characters are under the influence of Ecstasy, except for Michael's straight farmer brother Patrick (Gary Liburn), whose mix of bemusement, tolerance and prejudice at homosexuality is nicely captured. Here the material has the space to breathe. But there's an awkward distribution of emphasis again towards the end with a soap-opera rush of wounding home truths, revived resentments and uneasy reconciliations. We learn that Michael, as a little boy, stoutly defended his brother from a paternal beating; what turned him into a slippery, shier-away from responsibility remains, however, a bit of a mystery.

To 23 March. Booking: 0181-692 4446

## BLUES

### Jimmy Rogers, Belfast

Muddy Waters' mojo worker, the man to blame for heavy metal, awes Colin Harper

He was born Jimmy Lane in Mississippi in 1924 and has played guitar alongside the greats of the blues since 1947. If Jimmy Rogers told you he was the blues, there wouldn't be many contenders still around to argue the toss. His early recording career, under the Rogers pseudonym or with late harmonica genius Little Walter Jacobs, ran parallel with that of Muddy Waters. When Chess finally allowed Waters into a studio with a full electric band, Rogers was the man who plugged into a primitive amp and blustered on the songs that fired an island of white, middle-class, British, would-be guitar heroes.

Between 1951 and 1955, Waters' band defined Chicago blues with the original versions of virtually all the songs that have cropped up on Yardbirds albums and beer commercials ever since, after which Rogers went out on his own with a stream of generic US solo hits. Gary Moore's recent cover of one, "Walking By Myself" ensured that he needn't work again. So to see a towering figure of 20th-century music subjecting himself to long drives and plane rides round the outer reaches of Europe at such an age is an awesome thing. It's all he knows, apparently, and what would he do if he stopped? The fact is that Rogers' status is beyond contention. Furthermore, he can actually still produce the goods.

Arriving into Belfast from London via Dublin barely an hour before showtime, the whole band - leather trenchcoats, big jewellery and old-time courtesy in tow - were in a visibly exhausted state. The gig was in the Empire Music Hall, Belfast's most sumptuous "new" venue - which was probably still fielding custard pie acts when Rogers was preparing himself to take a good deal of the blame for heavy metal, half a century back.

The band featured Jimmy Lane Jr on lead guitar, Barrelhouse Chuck (yes, really) on piano/vocals, Freddie Crawford on bass, ex-Ray Charles man Ted Harvey on drums and the steaming Scott Bradbury on harp. Rogers himself came on in the fourth number. There was a tangible feeling of being in the presence of someone whose achievements are almost beyond comprehension, and a last link to another age.

Impressively tall, dressed in black and gently but effectively stroking a black Gibson 355 with no effects pedals whatsoever, he radiated a love for his craft and a delight to be here and playing for an audience. He introduced the numbers he knew we all knew - "Big Boss Man", "Walking By Myself", and intoxicating, fiery "Mojo Working" - with pristine clarity, and scatted mischievously through the ones not even his band members, it transpired, could put a title to.

"I'm tired and I'm travelling," began one song, and discreet enquiries yielded only blank expressions afterwards from the players in the dressing room. He was probably making it up, but that's the essence of the blues and this was certainly the real thing.

## CLASSICAL The Fifties: Towards the Millennium / CBSO, Simon Rattle. Jan Smaczny applauds an outbreak of tonality in the music of a maligned decade

CBSO's second main concert in their celebration of the 1950s revealed a quite different side of this much-maligned decade. An outbreak of tonality in the shape of Martinu's rarely heard oratorio *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony did much for everyone's understanding of the Fifties, complementing rather than contradicting the modernist orgy of Messiaen and Stockhausen at their most uncompromising featured in their first concert.

*Gilgamesh* was a brave choice. It's an elusive work whose obscure, ancient Sumerian text (especially unhelpful in the English translation of Campbell

Thomson which Martinu used) can seem to ask more questions than it answers. Musically it also poses considerable problems for the performers. Martinu's spare lines and quirky sense of motion add up to the sort of piece that only "comes together" after much effort, late in the process of rehearsal.

CBSO began its exhumation of the score by commissioning a revision of the libretto. Amanda Holden's makeover not only banished the odd "snood" and "awn", but made the whole text far punchier and comprehensible for performers and audience. The finished product from choir, orchestra and soloists must rank among

Rattle's finest rehabilitations, proving beyond doubt the viability of this unsettling masterpiece. The story of *Gilgamesh* may be nearly 5,000 years old, but it sprang to life with searing immediacy. The sense of involvement from the soloists, in particular Rita Cullis and David Wilson-Johnson, was complete. Rattle handled the accompaniment with profound insight, turning a score which, in the wrong hands, can sound close to organised chaos, into a miracle of luminosity.

And then there was the chorus: it would be hard to imagine a more thrilling rendition of Martinu's anguished, bittersweet harmonies. Their rich-

ness of tone, razor-sharp ensemble and above all, near-superhuman clarity of diction made this their most memorable outing of recent years. The only slight miscalculation in an otherwise richly convincing performance was the decision to divide the brief stretches of spoken narration between the male soloists. Part of the secret of Martinu's storytelling is the distance a separate narrator provides.

The contrast between the sober clarity of Martinu's vision of ancient mythology and one of Shostakovich's strongest, and most personal, symphonies was a bold piece of programming. Whether or not

Shostakovich's Tenth, with its ludicrously bombastic finale, is a joke at the expense of a vindictive Soviet regime didn't seem to be the issue at stake. Providing a context for the modern repertoire is one of the most virtuous aims of the "Towards the Millennium" festival. Nevertheless, Rattle and the orchestra left context, not to mention worries about what it all means, behind in a performance that played the work for all it was worth in purely musical terms. The wind solos of the third movement may have developed an almost operatic personality and the fast music had an impassioned conviction which took it

well beyond the abstract, but the performers never fell into the trap of preaching. If their performance didn't quite plumb the depths of one of the 20th century's most tortured souls, it did the equally estimable service of liberating this symphony from the wretchedness of the life from which it sprang.

Simon Rattle and the CBSO perform Britten, Stravinsky and Shostakovich for the final Birmingham concert in the 'Towards the Millennium' series on Tuesday. Booking: 0121-212 3333



THE WEEK IN REVIEW

David Benedict

## THE MUSICAL COMPANY

### overview

Sam Mendes transfers his Donmar Warehouse production of *Sondheim's* tart, tough and terrific musical dissection of marriage into the West End with the entire company intact.

### critical view

David Benedict praised the pumped-up energy level but "the enlargement also widens the production's cracks." "There is no getting away from the wit and brio of the staging or the sheer enjoyment of a wonderful cast," conceded the FT. "The change is an improvement," pronounced the *Times*. "A bitter-sweet but life-enhancing concoction... works even better," enthused the *Evening Standard*.

### on view

At the Albany Theatre, London WC2 (0171-369 1730) until 22 June.

### our view

The musical for people who hate them.

## THE FILM GET SHORTY

Barry Sonnenfeld's witty film-within-a-film, about movies and the mob is based on the Elmore Leonard novel and forms the latest chapter in the rise, fall and rise of John Travolta.

Ryan Gibbey was amused. "An amiable picture, and when all else fails, the *Casino*-esque crimes of fashion keep you grinning." "John Travolta is the best thing in it," declared the *Spectator*. "A breezy, smoothly sophisticated affair... everything clicks," cheered *Time Out*. "The actor outlines the material," opined the FT. "Impossible not to enjoy," concluded the *Guardian*.

On general release.

Travolta is on *Pulp Fiction* form, but groupies should track down *Moment by Moment* to see just how bad their hero can be.

## THE OPERA LA TRAVIATA

Richard Eyre's Covent Garden production - which has foray into opera - returns with Carlo Cazzul conducting rising soprano Andrea Rost as Verdi's doomed heroine, and Ramon Vargas as her lover.

Michael Church found Rost's voice "a little small but with real dramatic presence. In the long run she will give Georgeina a run for her money." Rost throws down a most substantial challenge to those who follow: "a performance that grew and grew in vocal stature," applauded the *Times*. "Performance capable of putting more established stars to shame," approved the *Evening Standard*.

Continuing in repertory at the Royal Opera House, London WC2 (0171-304 4000) until 23 March.

Compare and contrast with Angela Gheorghiu, who returns later this year to the role that turned her into a star.

## KEY

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- OK
- POOR
- DEADLY



# A thrilling addition to the menu

John Walsh lifts the lid on a startling first novel of epicurean snobbery and murderous brilliance

**T**arquin Winot, gourmet, dandy and intellectual snob, leads us into the meagre plot of *The Debt to Pleasure* like this: "In the late middle of summer, I decided to take a short holiday and travel southwards through France... I resolved that I would jot down my thoughts on the subject of food as I went, taking my cue from the places and events around me as well as from my own memories, dreams, reflections..."

If anything about this proposed journey – the modesty of its planning, the likelihood that some unpleasant truth about the narrator will gradually leak out – reminds you of a well-known novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, do not panic. Do not ring the Plagiarism Police. For Winot's journey is not just into the heart of foodie bliss, nor into *The Truth About Himself*, but also into a whole Echoland of literary nudges, homages, allusions and borrowings from the cream of a literary tradition to which John Lanchester has suddenly become, at 33, a distinguished addition.

Tarquin's gourmet excursion/discussion divides nicely into the four seasons: he examines the cuisine attending on each and provides seasonal menus, from caviare blinis in winter, round to a nasty mushroom omelette in late autumn. His lectures are breezily learned and endlessly digressive in the best postmodernist manner: you cannot proceed very far down his sentences without meeting a great bloated parenthesis ballooning across your path. He is fond of extrapolating metaphors of the human psyche from menus and changes of weather, drawing slender connections between barbeques and arson, garlic and the *massif central*, between the British liking for curry and a UFO landing-pad.

Though Winot is a vertiginous snob, with a drawing, Euripilic languor that makes you long to smack him round the head, he is full of self-conscious charm, and what he somewhere describes as "an attractive air of qualified omniscience". Lanchester gives him a stylistic trade-

**The Debt to Pleasure**  
by John Lanchester  
Picador, £15.99

mark, which is to announce a mildly interesting thesis – that rivers, for instance, have individual characters – and pursue it from France to Italy to Asia Minor, crossing art-historical and gastronomic frontiers with a crazed, don't-try-and-stop-me recklessness. You learn that the leak is celebrated in the name of Leighton Buzzard, that it's not cyanide but the skin of a cyanide victim that smells of bitter almonds, that the John Dory is known in French as "St Pierre" because of the discernible thumbprint, on its head of St Peter the fishing apostle.

Gradually Tarquin's private life emerges. We hear about his dead parents, his sculptor brother (also dead), his Irish nanny (dismissed for theft), the family's Norwegian chief Mithraug (fell under a Tube train). You learn about his current circumstances: that he is bald but affects a false moustache; that he is stalking a honeymoon couple from Normandy to Provence; that a woman called Laura, his "collaborator", is writing a biography of his talented brother; that his real name is Rodney... It gradually becomes all too clear what the mad Tarquin has in store for the doomed honeymooners, even as he continues to chat about *aloli* and tell you that Frédéric Mistral is the only poet to be named after "a major European wind".

We have grown used, over the last decade or so, to British novels laying out facts to conceal the gross matter once called "a plot" behind an untrustworthy surface. In *Waterland* it was history lessons about eels, sluices and fens; in *Flaubert's Parrot* it was the slithering factoids of biography; in *The Remains of the Day*, it was the formalities of servitude. Of it was look back, you could argue, to *Tristram Shandy*, the first sighting of



All appetite and no talent: The pleasures of the table, demonstrated by *The Satyr* and the *Peasants* by Jacob Jordaens

the Obsessive-Digressive strain of English literature; and all of them work or fail by the extent to which the sparkling shell is shown to belong to the naked flesh beneath. So are we looking here at 200 pages of languidly dressed-up postmodernist bollocks about food, squandered from John Lanchester's researches over three years as the *Observer's* food critic and interlarded with a thrillerish tale of revelations-on-the-run? Or at something more?

Amazingly, Lanchester pulls it off. *The Debt to Pleasure* gradually wears down your suspicions, to stand as a fully-achieved work of art. It does this

partly by the charm of engagement. So relentless is the flow of Winot's omniscience that one grows irritably keen to spot factual inaccuracies, linguistic mistakes, errors of judgement. Thus one falls with delight on his allusion to "jostling herds of *ignominia*" (*ignominia* means "we do not know"; it can't be pluralised) or his getting Sherlock Holmes's dictum about "eliminating the impossible" all wrong; or his thinking the Italian word *fiasco* is more expressive of mismanagement than the French *débauche* because of its "candidly chaotic" quality, when it's a perfectly sensible word meaning "flask"; and as for his

frankly bizarre suggestion that one should think of putting oregano in an Irish Stew... But these quibbles do not amount to a *cassoulet* of kidney beans: they just mean that one is being sucked into Tarquin's solipsistic world of footling pedantries.

Likewise, one cannot dismiss the flow of Winot's prose as mere gustatory wordspinning. Lanchester writes so stunningly well that one finds oneself laughing out loud at the perfection of his effects. Early on, Tarquin regards the paintings in a school hall, among which is a portrait "which suggested either that the artist was a tragically inept doc-

trinaire Cubist or that Mr RB Fenner-Crossway MA was in reality a dyspeptic pattern of mauve rhomboids". Later he casually throws off the most perfect extended metaphor of theatrical motherhood I've ever read. But just as you're sure his epicurean vapourings amount to nothing but noise, you realise that a sustained argument has been developing all along (calling in Leonardo and Michelangelo as witnesses) about artistic failure, about non-creation and how one's best work is that which is never even started, the perfect apology for an artist *manqué* – all appetite and no talent – who seethes with envy for a vulgarian brother who has a genuine artistic vocation.

It's this seriousness of intent, this rhetorical cunning, that makes Lanchester's book such a triumph. Not that it's entirely original – on the contrary. At different times Lanchester seems to be parodying Nicholson Baker's hyper-precision (there's a description of an espresso machine that's a straight out of *The Mezzanine*), Nabokov's patrician fakery (especially in *Pale Fire*), Beckett's magisterial craziness (the burnt-toast scene in *Dante and the Lobster*), and especially Gilbert Adair's *Love and Death on Long Island*, whose sneery academic narrator, half in love with trash culture, is a direct forerunner of Tarquin-Rodney. But where do you stop? After a while the merest phrase has you wondering: when he suggests a "simple luncheon (omelette, Vichy, peaches)", does he mean to allude to the opening page of Cyril Connolly's masterpiece of non-completion, *Enemies of Promise*?

Echoes notwithstanding, you have to salute the real thing. *The Debt to Pleasure* is a major work, the best British novel I've read since Adam Thorpe's *Upton*, a supreme literary construct that's also deliciously entertaining. Even the recipes are gorgeously seductive; several pages of my copy are flecked with stains of *ragu* and *ratatouille* to mark the moments when I could stand the temptation no more. It seems entirely appropriate.

## Space-cakes in Austenland

Byronic communes, fevers on the brain: Victoria Coren just about swallows a salacious sequel to 'Sense and Sensibility'

**A**nyone, writes Simon Brett in *The Faber Book of Parodies*, "can write in the style of Jane Austen." That should come as a bit of a blow to Emma Tennant, who is building something of a career on that skill: following her successful sequels to *Pride and Prejudice*, she now presents a timely sequel to *Sense and Sensibility*.

Brett has a point: like all great comic novelists, Austen has an immediately recognisable style which readily lends itself to imitation. In fact, it is infectious to the point of being irritating: watch *Sense and Sensibility* at the cinema and see if you don't come out saying, "I found it to be a particularly enjoyable amusement", or something very like it. It sticks in the brain like a catchy chorus; the film's success is easily measured by the

number of sub-clauses people have started using in conversation.

Emma Tennant has certainly caught the style. This is an impressive pastiche with very few false notes, bar the inclusion of words like "Susquehanna" and "nipple", which might be excused since the girls are married ladies now. She has had to cheat a little to make the plot work. *Sense and Sensibility* ends with Elinor and Marianne married and settled at Delaford; here it transpires that Elinor never made it to Delaford after all because of trouble with the in-laws. *Elinor and Marianne* follows her attempts to get there, and Marianne's adulterous dalliance with Willoughby, her old admirer, who cuts her off to a commune full of proto-hippies high on Byron.

**Elinor and Marianne**  
by Emma Tennant  
Simon & Schuster, £9.99

*Elinor and Marianne* is, like Austen's first draft of *Sense and Sensibility*, an epistolary novel – a spectacularly inconvenient form for a sequel, given the amount of background information which has to be shoe-horned in. Tennant's solution is to have the characters remind each other of everything that happened before, which introduces the unfortunate idea that they are all idiots. The coincidence of two secret love-children in the same house (a

fault of the original's rather schematic plot) would surely not have been forgotten by close family friends; yet Mrs Jennings writes "Willoughby is the father of the child the Colonel houses with his poor mother, the Colonel's daughter; yes, Charlotte, it all came out, if you recall." Elinor kindly sketches in the family tree for her sister: "Mrs Ferrars, as of course we have been made only too aware since John's marriage, is mother to Fanny, John's wife and our sister-in-law." It's true that Marianne had a bit of a fever in *Sense and Sensibility*, but the full loss of her mental faculties clearly ran deeper than Austen was prepared to admit.

Much to Tennant's credit, she has written a funny book and done some jolly things with the elderly Mrs Ferrars –

Nonsense and Senility in abundance. At times, she gets a bit too frisky, finding room for a farcical sub-plot involving the Prince Regent, and letting Willoughby race about with laudanum and pistols like a Gothic clown from *Northanger Abbey*. And one has to raise an eyebrow at Lucy Steele's griddle cakes, made with "an ingredient supplied by Meg Cox of this village which promises to provide happiness on ingestion". Space-cakes in Austenland? That must account for the appalling outbreak of memory loss.

The insurmountable problem is that Austen's characters are not supposed to live beyond the last page. *Sense and Sensibility* is summed up in its final chapter: "Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate. She was born to dis-

cover the falsehood of her own opinions, and to counteract, by her conduct, her most favourite maxims." And that's it, she's done it. The theme has been illustrated, the story told, the point made. Pumping up the deflated Marianne, making her un-learn the lessons of her life and launching her through the same hoops again is working against the novelistic principle.

Readers who mourn their loss at the close of a book may well find some comfort here. But be warned: these are only ghosts, summoned by a talented clairvoyant. And authors be warned: if you're planning to write a classic and want it to stand alone, be sure to add a postscript: "And nothing else ever happened to any of them."

## Teasing the nuts from the bolts

Science and religion continue to bicker over who owns what, says Colin Tudge

**T**he great religions seek to provide a complete and coherent account of the Universe that explains how everything came into and reveals why we are here. We survive by telling ourselves stories about how the world is, and an all-embracing narrative should put all the components into perspective.

For more than 1500 years after Christ, the all-embracing narrative seemed to grow ever more robust, especially when, in the Middle Ages, it enfolded Plato and the proto-science of Aristotle. Then, it seemed, the elevated emotional responses that we call "spiritual" had been married to irrefutably straight thinking and a smattering of observation. The monolith seemed complete.

But in the 1540s Copernicus suggested that the Sun and not the Earth is the centre of our planetary system – and 80 years or so later came Galileo, who advanced this idea and made it public and thus challenged the cosmological notions that at the time seemed important to the Catholic canon. Even so, as Russell Stannard describes in conversation with the astronomer Ron Naylor, the Catholic church did not object to Galileo's hypotheses any more than to Galileo's objections to Copernicus. It was Galileo they objected to. He was one of nature's satirists and a mite too provoking. I won't say you cannot blame the Jesuits for threatening him with torture, but when you read his comments you can certainly see their point of view. As Naylor says, if Galileo had been a little diplomatic – or indeed, halfway polite – the entire debate between science and religion this past 350 years

**Science and Wonders: Conversations about Science and Belief**  
by Russell Stannard, Faber, £8.99

would have been completely different. It would also have been more interesting. For in *Science and Wonders*, the physicist-turned-theologian Stannard has done a workmanlike job of interviewing scientists, priests, and theologians who in recent years have joined the science-religion debate. There is much that is intriguing, but the views that are aired are mostly old-fashioned. We seem to be stuck with Galileo vs the Jesuits – or with its 19th-century sequel, Charles Darwin vs the Anglican Church.

Richard Dawkins, for example, one of the outstanding theoretical biologists of his generation, has squandered hundreds of hours re-running the debate that TH Huxley had with Bishop Wilberforce in 1860. He is of the view that "the theory of evolution by natural selection is of its own sufficient to explain life", and invocations of a "creator god" are merely "explanatory overkill". Well, if Dawkins means that explanations should not be elaborated gratuitously then he is merely citing William of Ockham, a 14th-century friar whose dictum is summarised as "Occam's razor" (the spelling is flexible). But if Dawkins means what he seems to mean – that no one phenomenon merits more than one explanation – then he is obviously talking nonsense. We might as well say that

paintings can be explained simply by describing the distribution of pigments. I am not saying that there is a literal Creator; simply that you cannot argue in such a fashion that there is not. It's like people in woolly hats attacking science for being all atom bombs and doctored footnotes. Such discussion is unworthy.

In contrast, the physicist Paul Davies finds the mind of God within the order that he is discovering in the Universe. But then, so did Isaac Newton. Davies's physics is more advanced than Newton's, for the giants on whose shoulders he is able to stand have grown even taller than those who supported Newton. But he has not advanced on Newton's theology.

The really interesting arguments begin where those in *Science and Wonders* leave off. These discussions are not between bishops and scientists, but between radical theologians and priests on one hand, and humanists on the other. The task now is to render unto science that which belongs to science, and then to ask if anything is left, and whether it is worthwhile, and whether it should properly be called "religion", and if that religion differs from "humanism".

If the great religions are to survive our times they must embrace all science; yet they would surely add ways of refining emotional responses, and of reaching insights, at least of an ethical nature, that are outside science and in practice are in the special province of religion. The religion-science discussion will be as pressing in the 21st century as in the 17th, not least because of the rise of Islam. But it needs to be conducted in 21st-century terms.

## Vulgar English and fractious wives

William Hartston examines the strange profession of the linguistic trainpotter

**I** once had cause to look up the word "fardel" in a dictionary and the dance on which my Chambers led me has coloured my attitude to dictionaries ever since. Fardel, it informed me, besides being a pack or anything cumbersome or irksome, is also "the manplies or omasum". The definition given for "omasum" is: "a ruminant's third stomach, the psalterium or manplies". Now we're getting somewhere, I thought, but what's this psalterium? It's "the third division of a ruminant's stomach, the omasum or manplies", the dictionary told me, and the manplies, it divulged, is "the third stomach of a ruminant – the omasum or psalterium."

This excursion illustrates one of the fundamental problems of the lexicographer: in attempting to define every word in a language in terms of other words, an iterative process is set up that is bound eventually to disappear up its own fardel. When Dr Johnson, in the most celebrated dictionary of all, defined "network" as "any thing reticulated, or decussated, at equal distances, with interspaces between the intersections", did he think it would offer elucidation to anyone who did not understand what a network was?

The popular myth about dictionaries is simple. There weren't any until Dr Johnson came along, then he, single-handedly, collected all the words in the language, defined them in his own quirky manner and then made everyone wait another 150 years for Sir James Murray to come along and do the job properly with the *OED*. As Jonathan Green makes clear, the true story involves a

**Chasing the Sun: Dictionary Makers and the Dictionaries They Made**  
by Jonathon Green, Corgi, £25

network spanning five centuries of reticulated and occasionally decussated scholars, plagiarists, would-be social reformers and verbal propagandists.

The first English dictionaries of the Middle Ages were bilingual texts, translating from Latin – the only language for scholarship – into the vulgar form of English that was beginning to emerge from its mixed Anglo-Saxon and European origins. In the 16th century, lexicographers battled for the respectability of the English language. While academic traditionalists were inclined to resist the encroachment of English into Latin-dominated scholarship, linguistic nationalists tried to establish a formal basis for English as a language for rational and detailed discussion. Some tried to do so by adding to the language by anglicising Latin words. Others favoured the expulsion of all Latinisms from English, leaving it as culturally pure as possible. The result was the publication of numerous word-lists, thematically arranged, as propaganda for the various linguistic viewpoints. From the word-lists, the first monolingual English dictionaries emerged, each writer pillaging ruthlessly from everything that went before.

The most common form was seen in the "hard-word" dictionaries, such as

those of Henry Cockeram in 1623 and Thomas Blount in 1656. The latter, we are told, was the first to include the etymology of the words. (He indicated the work to be suitable, incidentally, for "the more-knowing women" and "less-knowing men.") What made Johnson's dictionary, in 1755, so exceptional was its inclusion of numerous citations alongside the definitions and etymological information. Never had such great erudition and sheer joy of language been demonstrated in a single work.

Jonathon Green's comprehensive study is full of splendid peripheral information on the lives of the lexicographers, of which the following may serve as an example. He writes of Thomas Cooper (1757-94): "His private life was less enviable. His wife Amy, bored by his endless fretting about the manuscripts, was notoriously generous with her sexual favours. So celebrated was one particular affair, with the Canon of Christ Church, that her lover was bound over to avoid her company... The hapless Cooper turned a blind eye."

Such dedication is the theme running through this entire book. Of all obsessive forms of collecting, the task of the word-collector is most onerous and most important, and Jonathon Green has truly captured the nature of the animal. It would probably have been an easier and no less entertaining read if the publishers had insisted on a work of half the length. But Mr Green, with the zeal of a lexicographer, seemed not to have the heart to leave anyone out. The result is a thoroughly illuminating work, if rather heavy going at times.



books

# A good yarn in Africa

Peter Godwin's memoir of a Zimbabwean childhood is a ripping colonial tale. By Hugo Barnacle



Scenes from Peter Godwin's family album, clockwise from far left: aged 8, gun and green mamba snake in hand; soldiers from the Zimbabwe national army in 1982; at play with a servant boy; Godwin's father; a young Peter with his sisters, mother and dog



Peter Godwin is best known as the *Sunday Times* stringer in Zimbabwe who exposed the Mugabe government's genocide campaign against the southern Matabele tribe in the mid-1980s. This memoir of his childhood and youth as a *mukwa* (whiteface) during the country's messy transition to black rule includes an account of life at a posh Jesuit boarding school which seems to invite comparison with Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*. Godwin's work inevitably comes off worst, but the book does demonstrate the vivid readability and the magpie's eye for a telling detail that make him an exceptional journalist.

His mother was chief medical officer for the eastern highland district where his father ran a forestry business. "I knew more than other children about dead people because I went with my mother when she dug them up and cut them open," he noticed that. "Death could apparently happen to anyone, although obviously it happened mostly to Africans. Whites only tended to die if they were very old. Africans died at any age."

One white person who did meet a pre-

mature end was the Godwins' neighbour Piet Oberholzer, dragged from his car and knifed by terrorists one evening in 1964. The Godwins had driven past a few minutes before the gang blocked the road with boulders, and they still weren't far away when the police call came on the radio. Hanging about at the crime scene while his mother filled in the *Sudden Death Docket*, five-year-old Godwin "wondered if perhaps I could have the knife when they'd finished with it."

The civil war proper did not get going until some years later. For a time, Godwin's mother even drove a 70-mile round trip twice a day taking him to school and back, fearing potholes more than ambushes. In the holidays, Godwin would help out at the clinic, dispensing polio-vaccine sugar cubes or wandering along the queues of patients to see if there were any urgent cases waiting at the back. He remembers Mercy, just 24 and already a mother of six because Shona husbands demanded annual offspring. She browbeat Dr Godwin into prescribing the Pill, unheard of for Africans then, and went on to become the first black family planning counsellor in the region.

**Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa**  
by Peter Godwin  
Picador, £15.99

Godwin did his service in the police, considered a better niche than the army, though the work involved was mostly the same, tracking and shooting terrorists. Sometimes the terrorists' trail was easy to follow: "women impaled on stakes. Whole families burned to death in their own huts". Sometimes it required the services of a genuine pygmy tracker.

The terrorists, from Shona and Matabele factions, spent most of their time killing each other rather than the security forces. "I walked around a hut and saw an old woman in a red dress, sitting against the wall... Then I realised her dress had not originally been red, it was soaked in blood. I lifted her head. Her throat had been cut." Godwin is careful to blame Smith's white government, for not conceding power fast enough.

He himself had near misses. His later life was charmed in other ways. He got a place to read law at Cambridge, returning after the war to a job with "a prominent legal firm" in Harare, just like that, and when the law passed, once he'd worked on the successful defence team in Mugabe's show trials of "dissidents", he had no trouble getting freelance work with the London papers.

Even when Mugabe tried to have him put away because of the *Sunday Times* story, a detective tipped him off, explaining, "I may have a Shona surname but my mother's family is from Matabeleland. Many of my people have been killed there." Godwin was safe in Botswana by the time they broke down the door. He was later allowed back, "as long as I didn't do any reporting."

Mukiwa is a ripping yarn told with an old hand's professional polish, funny and shocking at once but contriving to avoid any awkward clash of tone. Consider the moment, shortly after Godwin discovered the old mine-shafts full of Matabele bodies, when a drunk Shona general pulled a gun on him in front of the entire foreign press corps: "It was rather a beautiful weapon, I noticed, its handle inlaid with mother-of-pearl... 'I am going to kill you,' he announced. 'And then you'll be sorry. Drink, General!' invited his ADC, and produced the somewhat depleted bottle of Johnnie Walker. The general fumbled around for his tumbler and I slipped away."

## Successes with girls

Nicholas Wroe finds Kingsley Amis alive and well and writing about Hampstead

This is It  
by Joseph Connolly  
Faber, £15.99

In Joseph Connolly's second novel, the main character, a seedy landlord posing as a writer, is asked whether his much-vaunted book is "a Hampstead novel". The fact he hasn't actually written a novel doesn't prevent him from conceding that, "in many ways it might be". Equally *This is It* in many ways might be. It is certainly set in Hampstead and maybe criminal extortion, prostitution, drug abuse and sado-masochistic sex are to today's chattering classes what stripped pine and holidays in the Dordogne were to the previous generation.

In *Poor Souls*, his debut published last year, Connolly emerged as an impressively observant stylist: something of a hybrid between Kingsley and Martin Amis, opening as a broadly straightforward comic piece and closing with a young girl being raped with a gun barrel in an alcoholic frenzy.

In *This is It* he has tended to stay more firmly in Kingsley territory, only periodically sliding into Martin scenes when involving gangsters, tarts and a cough-syrup addict called Vole.

*This is It* opens with Eric Pizer, the bogus author and resident landlord of a block of bed-sits in Hampstead, being knocked down by a bus. It's just the beginning of his physical deterioration; he is regularly assaulted throughout the rest of the novel to cruel comic effect. His physical decline is matched by an increasingly precarious grasp on a personal life complicated by financial, logistical and structural problems - even his house starts to collapse.

Eric, like all the other characters as it turns out, has lots of secrets, most of them involving women. Decrepit, selfish and transparently duplicitous, Eric's habitual approach to women is to boast how he "put her down with wit and conclusion ('Oh do fuck off, Fiona')". Yet a string of attractive, sexually inventive and sometimes even young, women make themselves available to him. Glorifying in the astonishing powers of sexual attraction exercised by shabby, bookish, middle-aged men is becoming a Connolly trade mark. It could be seen as creepy, but taken in tandem with his wider assessment of women in *This is It*, it can assume a more elevated meaning. The depiction of Helen, a teenage daughter of Eric's friend and therefore only reluctantly allowed to worship him, as "not neurotic like most women are, but completely bloody asylum-standard mad", almost transforms one man's lechery into another man's homage.

But no amount of speculation as to Connolly's PC quotient alters the fact that he really can write. There is cringingly accurate dialogue, a morbid appreciation of downward mobility ("redundancy pay is the demob suit of the Nineties") and a robustly fantastic approach to characterisation. If he is at his best on modern manners - particularly in scenes involving food with some terrifying dinner parties and a fiasco in a restaurant - he also provides a convincingly funny and sad core to the motivations of his unsympathetic cast as they negotiate the half-lit world of middle-class penury.

The novel ends surprisingly neatly, although not neatly enough, entirely to tie up all the foregoing mayhem. While this points to an increasing control over his vulgarly readable talent, it gives little notion of where Joseph Connolly will go from here. He has moved from unpublished novelist to what looks like a literary fixture in about a year.

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read by Larry McKeever  
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read by John Le Carré

I can't quite account for the magnetism of Larry McKeever's mellifluous reading of James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (Recorded Books, 15hrs 30m, £47, or call 0171-731 6262 for mail-order rental). It is quite simply untimely: maybe that's what books of legendary fame are about.

The elusive John Le Carré reads his new novel *Our Game* (Hodder, 6hrs, £7.99) with chill panache. Even better are his four unique prefaces which offer a remarkable insight into his working life and political and personal ideals, and go far towards explaining the power of his books.

Christina Hardyment

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PAPERBACK

## Darkness at the heart of Mann

Peter Parker is absorbed by the secret life of 'the last great European man of letters'

Thomas Mann, by Ronald Hayman, Bloomsbury, £25

In the final sentence of this long-over-detailed but largely absorbing biography, Ronald Hayman describes Thomas Mann as "the last great European man of letters". He died in 1955, and it is hard to think of a writer since who has had so solid an international reputation not only as a bestselling novelist but also as an all-purpose intellectual heavyweight. His life was punctuated by public readings of work in progress, lectures, monumental essays, testimonial dinners, and the bestowing of laurels and prizes. Until forced into exile by the Nazis, he lived a well-ordered life of some splendour in Munich with his wife and children - the epitome of bourgeois respectability.



Thomas Mann in 1916: sexual fixations were transfigured in his work

The terrible personal cost of maintaining this public image is what provides Hayman with his principal theme. The real man, as he skilfully and persuasively demonstrates, is to be found in the books. "Thomas Mann's work," he tells us, "is full of self-portraiture, and none of his characters tells us more about him than Aschenbach."

The protagonist of Mann's beautifully compact tale - a superb miniature in an oeuvre not otherwise characterised by concision - comes to Venice in order to take a holiday from a life devoted to "rigid, cold and passionate duty". A similar impulse must have led Mann to write his diaries, in which he describes his obsessions with a succession of young men and boys similar to the story's Tadzio. It seems that none of these passions resulted in anything more physical than the occasional kiss, which is just as well since the original of Tadzio was a mere 10 years old and his successors included both Mann's son Klaus and his grandson Frido.

Sexual restraint may explain why Mann's erotic fixations maintained their power over him and became transfigured in his work. It has often been said, usually by alarmed critics, that *Death in Venice* is not a story about an old man's pursuit of a young boy; this is partly true, but there would have been no story at all had not the susceptible Mann become captivated by the beautiful Wladyslaw Moes, who years later vividly recalled the man "who'd been watching him wherever he went", and who remembered "an especially intent look when he and the man were together in the elevator" of the Hotel des Bains.

Although Mann incorporated innumerable details from his 1911 Venetian holiday into *Death in Venice* - including the mysterious gondolier and the ancient dandy, both of whom take on roles that are heavy with symbolism - he excludes his wife, who was with him at the time. (Aschenbach's wife is conveniently dead.)

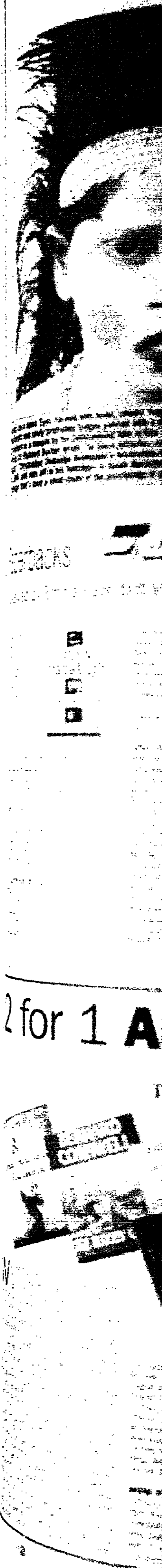
In spite of a marriage lasting 50 years, and to all appearances characterised by devotion, Katia Mann was often as sidelined in her husband's life as she was in his fiction. He had married her virtually on the rebound from a four-year friendship with a painter called Paul Ehrenberg, a relationship Mann always considered the "central emotional experience" of his life. Ehrenberg was the same age as

to themselves, and certainly more attention than they receive here. The most gifted were the two eldest, Erika and Klaus, both of whom were writers and homosexual, which makes their relationship with their father particularly interesting. Born almost exactly a year apart, Erika and Klaus were especially close and apparently pretended to be twins.

Erika became Mann's invaluable amanuensis, but Klaus's principal hold upon his father's attention was as a burgeoning 13-year-old, surprised one evening romping naked around his bedroom. A later glimpse of Klaus with his shirt off made Mann wonder whether he had lost all interest in heterosexuality, and this potent image surfaced many years later in the description of Joseph in Mann's biblical tetralogy of novels. Grown up, Klaus was of less interest to his father, who refused to interrupt a lecture tour when his unhappy son eventually committed suicide.

The complicated dynamics of Mann's relationships with his children remain rather sketchy but elsewhere Hayman's book is extremely thorough and, even when dealing with such potentially explosive matters as incest and pederasty, remains admirably level-headed and unjudgemental. What emerges clearly is that Mann's story is essentially a tragedy. But in spite of his pomposity, his chilliness, his ruthlessness and selfishness, he remains curiously sympathetic.

At the age of 75, Mann enjoyed a final, preposterous flirtation with a hotel waiter. "World fame means a great deal to me," he wrote, "but it is nothing in comparison with a smile from him. The look in his eyes." Naturally, it came to nothing, and Mann wrote his own epitaph: "It will probably be a relief - the return to work as substitute for happiness. That is how it must be. It is the condition (and the origin?) of all genius."





## Successes with girls

Chris Wroe finds Kingsley his alive and well and rags about Hampstead

is it  
Joseph Connolly  
Dec. £15.95



Joseph Connolly's new novel, *Is It*, is a dark and disturbing study of a man's descent into madness. It is a masterpiece of psychological fiction, and a must-read for anyone who enjoys a good thriller. (Penguin, £15.95)

## Kissing the blarney goodbye

On St Patrick's Eve, Antonia Logue considers the new sophistication of Irish short-story writing

It is over a decade now since the critic David Marcus's influential *Literary Review* article on the Irish short story, "Understandably," he wrote, "British publishing houses don't often bring out story collections by new Irish writers — perhaps a good thing, for when they do their marked preference is for the kind of short story they think Irish writers should write... generally the most pretentious, neo-Celtic mystification, and semi-poetic effusions."

Much has happened in 10 years — besides a current zest for young, potentially fashionable Irish writers in British publishing houses, that paddywhackery cuteness Marcus refers to has almost completely disappeared in the contemporary Irish short story: witness the recent first collections by Colum McCann, Mary Morrissey, and Phillip MacCann, each of which were potent salvos of fierce originality.

Of the three most recent collections to emerge, Frank Ronan is perhaps the most established, with three novels preceding this volume of stories. Like many before him, the territory he marks in *Handsome Men Are Slightly Suburban* (Sceptre, £8.99) is the idiosyncratic entrapment of relationships, and his take on them involves a variety of perspectives: the kid with the pregnant girlfriend and homophobia, the widow whose life is refocused by a friendship with a gay couple, the married man who develops a habit of laughing at nothing in order to gain control of his marriage.

Ronan narrates his tales with an almost bemused displacement, gaining most currency when he abandons the gibberish of his ironic musings, and instead wends his em-

phatic prose through stories such as "The Sticky Carpet" or "The Last Innocence of Simonson," each one a consummate mender thorough sexual confusion and loneliness. Ronan is a soundbite writer, too easily lured into the one-liner ("You might as well take up with someone with whom you can have decent sex between the battles, so that the entire exercise isn't a waste.") Few devices hide lack of talent as effectively as irony, and Ronan desperately under-sells himself in invoking it: few of his peers can match him when he writes, without acerbic adornment, of love, especially between men.

The notion of an Irish literary diaspora is hardly a new one: the writing *emigre* is virtually a genre of its own. Michael Collins fits oddly in its compass, having lived in Chicago since a teenager, but writes as if his life has never moved beyond the local pub. *The Feminists Go Swimming* (Phoenix, £5.99) is a curious mixture: a style so arrestingly visual it hijacks the reader's concentration, dazzling with the energy and originality of the language; but the content is perplexing. Characters emerge like mummified stereotypes, as in "The Drinker", in which the sound of "the background thunder of steel kegs rolling into the cellar" is the central character's favourite "apart from the central character's favourite 'apart from the being pulled by a harman and then left to sit in blackness. If there was a heaven, it had a small bar that never closed, set down near the sea." Ah begorrah, if it wasn't for your youth you'd swear he'd been scribbled on *The Quiet Man*.

Collins writes with what the critic Tim Pat Coogan once referred to as "a consciousness

of being Irish rather than the consequences of it", and while no one ever demands that any writer exclusively explore the "consequences" of their nationality, this long-distance awareness of Ireland as a country of men worn down by tired women, of the smell of whiskey and taste of defeat, suffices the simple brilliance of his language.

The publicity paraphernalia that accompanies Mike McCormack's debut collection *Getting It in the Head* (Cape, £9.99) makes much of the fact that he worked in a butcher's shop until recently (until he got his advance presumably). The images of gristle and blood-under-the-nails suits this collection. In "Thomas Crumple", McCormack lays on a viciously inventive parody of the pretensions of the art world, with a character who gradually sheds his major limbs and organs for his art. It may sound chronic, but in the reading it gives Ian McEwan and Edgar Allan Poe a run for their money.

The title story explores the relationship between two brothers, one a drifter, one a dangerously precocious child. "Oestrogen" offers us a young Irish farmer newly arrived in Dublin to grow breasts via female hormone pills, before heading back to Mayo to convert his inheritance into an ostrich farm. "The Angel of Ruin" is the story of a student working in America at a perilously decaying chemical plant, and becoming obsessed by it, by its symbolism and its evil.

Decay and ruin seep through this book, driven by some of the finest prose to have emerged in over a decade. The Irish short story is thriving, and in the hands of writers like McCormack it can only continue to.

## Paperbacks

Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst

**In Every Face I Meet** by Justin Cartwright (Sceptre £5.99). Shortlisted for last year's Booker, this is the story of a February day in 1990, and of two Londoners in particular.

Anthony Northleach, an amiable, rugby-playing advertising executive and Chanelle Smith, crack addict and prostitute. More comfortable inside Anthony's head than in Chanelle's, Cartwright engineers a fatal collision of their two worlds in an unlit street in South London. An indictment of Thatcher's Britain, but works better as an anthropological study of late 20th-century urban man.

**The Apartheid of Sex** by Martine Rothblatt (Pandora, £7.99). With the zeal of the missionary, and the persistence of a lawyer (which she is), Rothblatt preaches the gospel of Transgenderism, and the joyful message

that just because you're born with a penis doesn't mean you're a man. She takes up the nature versus nurture debate, but waits until the last chapter to reveal her own colours: once a man she is now a "transperson" who enjoys a "wonderful unisexual lesbian marriage" and midnight meals in Georgetown, "eyes sparkling in the candlelight".

**After the Fair** by Jo Riddett (Headline Review, £5.99). In old age Connie and Gledwyn Geddes find themselves back at Wickenwood, a Victorian pile built on the profits of tinned meat and Northern gunpoint. Brother and sister have never been close, and with the arrival of their respective children and grandchildren for the summer fair, Connie retreats to her room to pop paracetamol and brood on the passage of years. A

melancholy novel which details the gin-and-tonic haze of a failed Fifties marriage and the "dread octopus" of family ties.

**From Sea to Shining Sea** by Gavin Young (Penguin, £6.99). These stateside jaunts from a top-notch travel writer follow historical trails with varying success. His account of General Sherman's epic march through the Confederacy is a triumph, combining past horrors and modern resonances. But an early attempt to see modern LA through the eyes of Philip Marlowe is marred by weak pastiche. You've got to admire Young's spirit. After being told he should return in the sub-zero winter to see the real Yukon, he does just that.

**Casting Off** by Libby Purves (Sceptre £5.99). Deep down you hope head-girl Libby Purves won't be good at everything, but her first novel scores a perfectly competent B+. The story of

Joanna Gurney, wife, mother (and part-owner of the "The Bun in the Oven" tea shop) who sails off in the family yacht leaving her husband fuming on the quayside. Might have been even jollier with Sandy Toksvig on board.

**The Englishman's Flora** by Geoffrey Grigson (Helicon, £12.99). Long-awaited reprint of the gruff poet's magisterial reference work — a wonder both for its erudition. Fatal to skip through, you'll be detained on every page. Did you know cuckoo-pint derives from *pindle* or *penis*? Or that Ragwort was ridden, broomsick-style, by faeries? This book is as refreshing as a bouquet of wild flowers.

**The Village that Died for England** by Patrick Wright (Vintage, £8.99). A long (400 pages) but engaging dissertation

on Tyneham, an idyllic Dorset hamlet taken over for tank-training in 1943. Somehow, the military never got round to returning it, though they're very proud of recent conservation work. As a symbol of a lost England, Tyneham has been appropriated by romantics and right-wingers, ranging from PD James and Prince Charles to the National Front.

**Private Myths: Dreams and Dreaming** by Anthony Stevens (Penguin, £8.99). A Jungian analyst probes the world of dreams — in particular, how they relate to our evolutionary development. Hitler dreamed of being buried alive (and so escaped that fate in reality), while Descartes conceived melons and a unified mathematical theory. Stevens is a stimulating writer, though the reader has to negotiate hard-core Jungian concepts — "the suprapersonal Atman", the "Oneness of Everything" etc.

## Who's reading whom?

Carmen Calilli finds wonderful relief in the nomadic pleasures of *Desert Places* by Robyn Davidson (Viking)



I'm having to read three novels a week for the book I'm writing about fiction since the 1950s, so Robyn Davidson's earthy account of her time with the nomads of the Thar desert in Rajasthan is wonderful relief. Ten years ago she crossed the Australian desert by camel — so the physical hardships she finds are not unexpected. But the nomads' poverty and isolation is. Their ancient way of life simply cannot stand up to the strains of the 20th century and to India's expanding population. They are increasingly obliged to settle in order to lay any claim to territory with catastrophic results.

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James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* is the most celebrated biography in the English language. Based on a deep personal friendship and enhanced through meticulous research, Boswell paints a portrait of a man at once melancholic yet witty, dogmatic yet possessed of a powerful common sense, overbearing yet capable of great kindness. Read by David Rintoul, this is a remarkable evocation of a remarkable man.

Set in post-war Los Angeles, *Devil in a Blue Dress* is a tale of murder and double-crossing as black war veteran Easy Rawlins is hired

to track down jazz-club aficionado Daphne Monet. This gripping tale, with brilliant dialogue and a strong film noir feel, is read by Oscar nominee Paul Winfield.

The tiny, inter-dependent community of San Piedro Island is thrown into confusion when a fisherman is found drowned and a Japanese American is charged with his murder. *Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson is a gripping, densely atmospheric masterpiece of suspense and is read by Tim Pigott-Smith.

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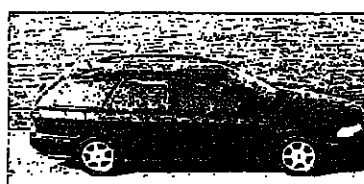
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## motoring

road test  
Volvo S40

The S80 proved that Volvos did not have to be dull to be safe. Volvo's quest to sharpen its image has now been taken a step further with the launch of two glamorous new mid-range models. Out goes the traditional chisel-edged styling and in come chic and sensuous curves. Bridging the gap in price and size between the 400 and S80, the new 40s are the product of a collaboration with Mitsubishi. The four-door S40 and five-door V40 live up to expectations on most fronts, including packaging, roominess, quality, appointments and comfort.

The seats (based on the S80's) and driving position are first class and the safety features, which include anti-lock brakes and front and side airbags, are unsurpassed at this level.

Dynamically, however, the new Volvos struggle to meet class benchmarks. Performance of the top 2.0, powered by a four-cylinder version of Volvo's modular fives and sixes, is no longer competitive. Acceleration is spirited only when the rather vocal engine is extended.

With optional stiff sports suspension and wide tyres, the Volvo handles crisply. Normally sprung and shod, however, they feel a bit vague and ungainly on the corners, though never less than uncrisply secure. Tyres, it seems, are the key to sharp handling. Various option packs (Comfort, Luxury, Audio, Sport, Family) mean buyers can specify what suits their needs and pocket.

Roger Bell

## Specifications

Volvo S40 four-door 1.8, from about £14,000. Engine: 1731 cc, four cylinders, 16 valves, 115bhp at 6000rpm (137bhp for 2.0). Five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive. Top speed 121mph (130mph 2.0). 0-60mph in 10.3 seconds (9.1), fuel consumption 34.7mpg.

## Rivals

Audi A4, BMW 3-series, Citroen Xantia 1.8, Ford Mondeo 1.8, Mitsubishi Carisma 1.8GLS, Peugeot 406 1.8, Vauxhall Vectra 1.8.

## Selling your car without getting stung

And how you can get ahead in the part-exchange game. By James Ruppert

Learning in the showroom is the new car of your dreams. Parked outside is your old nightmare of a motor. In order to afford the new car you must sell the old one. Of course, the car salesman is all too willing to help out by inviting you to do a part exchange. That sounds like a sensible and simple solution to your problem, but have you ever stopped to consider what's in it for them? There really is more to the part-exchange game than just swapping old for new.

A car dealer only offers the trade value, nothing more, and sometimes less. This is effectively the wholesale price for a particular model. Adjustments are made for condition, age and mileage and there will be furtive glances into the car trade price bible (*Glass's Guide* and *CAP Black Book*) to confirm that figure. However, that is rarely the amount which will be offered. In order to strike a deal on the spot a salesman uses the profit on the new car to inflate the trade-in value of the old car. But the customer loses out, because negotiating a discount on the new car is not on.

You can win at the part exchange game, though, by doing a little research and uttering the magic words "price to change". All you need to discover is the lowest retail price of the new car and the real trade value of the part exchange. The difference between the two is the price you want to pay. Firstly, buy a price guide from your newspaper, these are small format magazines (such as *Parker's*) which are the public's equivalent of the trade guides and accurate enough. It will reveal how much your car is worth to the car trade. To double check this figure and for a local perspective, ring up some car dealers and offer to sell them your car and see what they quote.

If the replacement car is secondhand, using the guide calculate the difference between trade and retail price to "guesstimate" their profit. That is the figure which you need to erode to get the best deal. If you are buying a new car then the best policy is to shop around and find out who offers the best "price to change", the difference between what you get for your old car and the price of the replacement.

One of the best tactics is to negotiate on the new car without mentioning a



part exchange, secure a good discount, then at the last moment introduce your old car. As the salesman has invested lots of time he won't want to double back. Even better, breeze into the showroom without a car. By far the best way to get a decent part exchange deal is to sell privately then go cash in hand to the dealer and negotiate from a position of strength.

Welcome to plan B: selling your car privately. This way you get more than the trade price, but also several times more hassle. Never mind, roll your sleeves up and clean that car if you can't be bothered, get a valet company to do it for you at around £30 to £50. Dirty cars don't sell, or at least don't sell for as much as clean ones. Tidiness and shininess can add a couple of hundred to an otherwise ordinary £2,000 car.

Next, gather together any information you have: handbooks, old MOTs, service history, warranties, receipts for any garage work and parts, then put them in a file. This always creates a good impression with buyers, because anyone who keeps paperwork like this, must also have a neat car - well that's the theory anyway. Another way to attract buy-

ers is to set a fat selling price. Look at local private advertisements to see what similar cars are being offered for.

Set a minimum figure which is financially acceptable to you, because no one pays the asking price these days and you will be expected to negotiate downwards. For instance, you need a minimum £2,500 to put down as a deposit; cars similar to yours advertised for up to £3,000, then £2,750 has to be attractive to buyers yet leave room for manoeuvre.

It is vitally important to advertise in the right medium. Cheap cars, hatchbacks, saloons and estates up to £3,000 sell better in a local paper, or free ads publications. Specialist cars like off-roads and sports cars - as well as more expensive vehicles - ought to be sold in the relevant sections of the local *Auto-trader* publication which feature thumb sized snaps and ads. Prestigious and expensive cars £15,000-plus should find their way into up-market newspapers.

If your car is old enough to count as a classic, then choose any of the monthly publications, or the *Classic Car Weekly* newspaper. Write a brief ad, stating

model, mileage, year, colour and price.

Now wait for the phone to ring. Most people are genuine, but some criminals can take advantage of an obliging seller so it is important to keep control of the situation. Make appointments to suit you and be strict about time keeping. Insist on identification, seeing a driving licence and insurance cover. Never let customers drive off on their own and never get into a car with the buyer and a couple of his burly mates.

Always have at least one friend or member of the family with you when a buyer calls. Be polite and honest, but make no representations about the condition of the car. Never hand over the keys unless you have the money in your hands. There are lots of stolen building society cheques and bank drafts around, so do not accept these unless you go with the buyer to the relevant bank or building society to confirm that the draft is genuine. Finally write a brief note giving basic details of the parties involved and a description of the car with the words "sold as seen", and get the buyer to sign it.

It's vitally important to advertise in the correct medium

## Selling your car privately

Always clean the car, ensure that a friend, or family member is with you at all times during the sales process; be realistic about the value of your car.

Never let your car out of sight - before it has been paid for in cash, or with cleared funds; allow a potential buyer drive the car on their own, or without knowing whether they have a driver's licence and insurance; make any promises about the car's mileage, history, or reliability unless you have full documentary proof to support any claims.

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# How to create your dream home: tell the builder what you want before you move in

By Anne Spackman

It is a measure of how far buyers now call the shots in the property market that the word "bespoke" has started to creep into the vocabulary of house building. In an industry long associated with off-the-peg uniformity, the idea of a tailored personal service seems unlikely. But it is a carrot being dangled increasingly in front of prospective customers to persuade them to part with their money.

The word bespoke is a slight exaggeration for what is actually on offer. It is not so much a case of the builder offering Madam a longer line in the kitchen, with the main bedroom taken in a little at the sides, as offering alternative fittings, tiles, colour schemes and even layouts.

The general rule of thumb is that the earlier you commit yourself to the property, the more changes you will be allowed to make. Also, the more expensive the house, the more tolerant the builder is likely to be of your personal requirements.

Many builders now offer

choices in the kitchen and bathrooms. At Berkeley Homes' enormous development of 320 houses and flats at Barnes Waterside, south west London, buyers have a choice of 12 kitchen cupboard doors and more than 30 ranges of tiles. The size of the site and the price of the property (which ranges from £110,000 for a one-bedroom flat to £1.8 million for a six-bedroom mansion) makes such choices economically possible.

On most developments the scope is more limited. A typical arrangement would be that offered by Grove Manor Homes in Islington, north London. The company is building nine villas in traditional Victorian style and 25 apartments in two blocks. Buyers of apartments have a choice of tiles; buyers of the five-bedroom semis also have choices of doors and fittings.

Jeff Duggan of Grove Manor Homes said they had been happy to accommodate the buyer's wishes because they had exchanged contracts early on a

very expensive property. "It's like buying a new Rolls-Royce rather than a second hand Mini," said Mr Duggan. "It reflects the market. In the Eighties, when prices were shooting away, builders had more of a 'take it or leave it' attitude. They did not need to cater for individuals because if one buyer did not like something, they could sell it to someone else the next day. If houses are harder to sell you have to be more receptive to purchasers."

Ty Homes offers buyers of the mews development in the centre of Winchester the normal range of choices, but has knocked walls down for one woman customer who bought early enough. Louise Connell, the company's sales director, said most people were happy to accept the builder's layout. "Customers often feel nervous about their own abilities to design the space they require," she said. "However, we have had clients with real imagination who are able to conceptualise what they want from plans and in those cases we do all we can

to accommodate their ideas."

One buyer who fits this description better than most is David Starkey, a designer of motor yachts. Trained as an architect, he has a professional's eye for how best to use space. He has used his skills to such good effect on the new home he is buying that the developers are offering his layout as an alternative in their brochure.

Mr Starkey lives with his wife and four children in a four-storey Victorian house in Islington, south-west London. They were looking to buy another old house in nearby Richmond when Richmond Bridge Moorings first came on the market. As soon as they saw the location and the plans, they were sold.

"Part of the deal at Richmond Bridge was that we could make internal changes. The house gave us five bedrooms, a good sitting room, a family room and a garage—all the components we wanted were there—but I wasn't happy with the way it was put together. The Starkeys completely

re-designed the ground floor of their three-storey house, knocking out the wall between the kitchen and dining room and rearranging the space to create a raised open plan kitchen, an eating area and a sitting area. They got rid of the downstairs lavatory and took the bidets out of the bathrooms to give more space on the landings and for walk-in wardrobes.

They took out all the Victorian details such as fireplaces, plaster cornices and brass light fittings and replaced them with more simple ones. "What's wrong with a white plastic light switch?" asked Mr Starkey. The interior walls will be polished plaster and instead of carpets there will be old oak floors in the main reception rooms.

"From our point of view it was an ideal opportunity," Mr Starkey said. "We didn't have the time to find a site and get a house designed. This was a good compromise." Did he fear that by creating such a personal house he risked finding it difficult to sell? "I have been buying and

selling houses for more than 20 years," he said. "and I have never lost money on a house. If I had to, I think I could sell this house immediately for as much as it has cost, though I have no intention of doing so."

The Starkeys' home is costing them around £775,000. But buyers of cheaper properties should not feel prohibited from making changes. Builders want to sell fast, it may be cheaper for them to change the kitchen units than to finance the loan on the property. Even if the house is complete, builders may make changes in order to get it off their hands. It never hurts to ask.

Barnes Waterside, from Belisleu Buxton (0181-741 7490) and Knight Frank (0171-824 8171); Grove Manor Homes from Copping Joyce (0171-359 9777); Richmond Bridge Moorings from Hamptons (0181-940 2772); St James Mews from Hamptons (01962 842030).

## Househunter Bristol

With its arched windows, carved stone figures and cross on the roof, this house on Sion Hill in Clifton seems to deserve the name—St Vincent's Priory—inscribed over the doorway. But there is no evidence to show it ever served a religious purpose, so it may simply have been conceived as a Gothic Revival folly. Built in 1810, the four-storey house retains its elaborate cornices, friezes and marble fireplaces. It has three bedrooms, three reception rooms and a self-contained flat in the basement. Hamptons in Chew Magna (01275 532523) and Hydes in Clifton (01174 731516) are asking £2750,000.

## For what it's worth

Seven successive months of small price rises have brought the housing market out of its second recessionary dip and back to where it was in the spring of 1994, when nearly 80 per cent of estate agents reported stable prices in the survey by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Its latest report shows a similar figure of 82 per cent. The Inland Revenue's transaction figures also showed a sharp rise in January confirming the Halifax Building Society's view that the number of property moves will go up by 10 per cent this year. However, that would only bring them back to 1994 levels. The Halifax predicts a tiny two per cent rise in prices this year, though it says this could rise if the strong January and February market continues.



David Starkey: an eye for how best to use space

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gardening

# What you need is a well-mannered climber

You don't have to grow ferocious roses up your arches and pergolas — clematis, jasmine and campsis are far more easy going. By Anna Pavord

**C**ollapsing pergolas were much on my mind last year and when I wrote about ours falling to its knees, complete with mounds of solanum, rose, wistaria and clematis, many readers wrote in with solutions to the problem. John Torode of London recommended replacing my larch and elm with steel reinforcing mesh: cheap, thick enough not to rust through and easily available through builders' merchants.

Ruth Clarke of Harrold in Bedfordshire took his advice and is delighted with the result. She has used the mesh for an arch, six feet long with some trellis work adjoining. "It looks quite splendid," she says. "It is strong, lightweight in appearance (important in a small cottage garden), graceful and very functional. Now I need ideas of what to plant over it to have some interest all the year. And no thorns."

I know what she means about thorns. I spent three days last week untying old growths of Ranting Rector, Kiftgate and Easlea's Golden Rambler from the pergola, cutting out a proportion of it and re-tying it, together with the new wands of growth. With one branch stuck in your hair, and another hanging on to your hand with the grim ferocity of a pit bull at bay, you begin to wonder why you grow roses.

Easlea's Golden Rambler has particularly vicious thorns, and is a trifle stiff, but despite these drawbacks, it is still one of the best of the roses on the pergola. Pruning it is made slightly complicated by the fact that it is smothered in a very vigorous spring flowering blue Clematis *macropetala*. Since the rose's legs are bare, it needs this softening skirt, but the clematis winds its tendrils everywhere and you have to cut out the old growths bit by bit in the short lengths left between their handholds. Autumn flowering *Viticella* clematis are easier to use with climbing roses on a pergola because you can cut all the stems down to within 18 inches of the ground in February and then prune the roses without their interference.

What about the thornless rose Zephirine Drouhin asks Ms Clarke? What about Kathleen Harrop I would reply. Zephirine Drouhin is an aggressive kind of pink and slightly too prone to blackspot and mildew for my taste. Kathleen Harrop is a much easier colour, a soft shell pink, but shares the same advantages of being thornless and highly scented and will climb to nine feet if tied in to a support.

In the main, though, Ms Clarke will have to look elsewhere than among roses for climbers to cover her arch and trellis. As in any other planting scheme, she will need some climbers with good foliage to give the bulk and luxuriance that makes a garden feel comfortable. Roses alone would not sufficiently camouflage the industrial underpinning of the structure.

For its airy, ferny foliage, as well as its clusters of flowers (orange, red or yellow, depending on variety) I am very fond of *eccremocarpus*. It has been the making of an east wall, where I let it loose recently to scramble up invisible lengths of chicken wire fixed to the masonry.

In mild winters it is evergreen. This year it has been cut to the ground by cold, leaving a messy tangle on the wall which will have to be cleared away this month before it starts shooting from the base

again. It is generous in terms of flowering period, starting in midsummer and going on until the first frost. It is also well-mannered when it has to share its living space with another climber. That is more than you can say for honeysuckle which tends to swamp or strangle all but the toughest hosts.

Clematis of course will be near the top of anyone's list for covering an arch such as Ms Clarke has made, but they look very much better if they are grown through some host climber such as a vine, which will bulk up the clematis's own spindly growth. The most successful vine on our pergola is *Vitis vinifera* *Purpurea* which supports two clematises. One is an alpina, which performs in April and May before the vine has fully leafed-up. Compared with most clematises, *C. alpina* is weak in growth, rarely getting beyond 6ft, but it is extremely hardy. Growing with the vine is Frances Ravis which has mid-blue flowers with white stamens. Elsewhere, I have White Columbine, one of the most free-flowering of the alpinas, with pure white flowers.

The second of the vine's clematises fills in at the other end of the season, during August and September. It is *C. viticella* *Etoile Violette* which has rich violet flowers with a creamy little boss of stamens in the centre. This is a vigorous tribe, but easy to manage. They mind wind less than other types of clematis and they do not seem to collapse with wilt, which has just carried away Mrs Cholmondeley on the front of our house.

Ms Clarke says she is hoping to have "interest all the year". She does not say though how big her trellis is and without sufficient space to play with, all year interest is a tall order. If she has not got it elsewhere in her garden, she should plant winter jasmine. In late November it is the most heart warming sight in the garden when everything else is drear and pinched. It needs to be trained up high and allowed to cascade down to display itself most effectively. The growth is lax and easily put where you want it. Through the jasmine you could grow a yellow clematis such as *C. tangutica*. Where height is limited, go for the Helios variety which only grows to about five feet.

*C. tangutica* is an easy going clematis which you can prune or not as you please. I have one growing through jasmine and I prune it in November, before the jasmine comes into flower. The approved pruning time is February. Elsewhere, *C. tangutica* grows on its own over a stone wall and is never pruned. In terms of flower quality, there doesn't seem much to choose between them, so I would not say that pruning enhances performance. It is useful though to be able to let the host shrub breathe for a while without a clematis bearing down on its shoulders.

Campsis, a tropical looking climber, with excellent foliage and brilliant orange red flowers, needs space, as do hop and passion flower. But even without these, Ms Clarke would have flower from the jasmine from November to March, from *C. alpina* during April and May, from the rose for a long period during summer, and from the other two clematis from July through September, when they would be backed by the dusty purple foliage of the vine. In October the vine itself will flare into brilliant prominence before it drops its leaves in front of the emerging flowers of the jasmine. Full circle.



Clematis will be near the top of most lists for climbers. The one drawback is that they tend to look a little spindly if grown on their own — for trellis or arches, set them against vines for added bulk and luxuriance. Photograph: The Garden Picture Library

gardening

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A wide range of down-to-earth garden sundries is now available mail order through Garden Direct, who launched their new catalogue earlier this year. They offer concentrated seaweed extract (£4.50 per litre) which you can mix up into an extremely effective foliar feed; pelleted chicken manure (£3.75 for 3kg) to scatter as a feed among plants; sulphur candles for fumigating greenhouses (£2.50 for a 22g candle sufficient for a 10ft by 8ft greenhouse); Supergel Water retaining granules to use in hanging baskets (£2.95 for 100g) and much more. Catalogues available from Garden Direct, Geddings Road, Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 0LR (01992 441888).

The curious Swiss Garden at Old Warden, Biggleswade, is open in aid of the National Garden Scheme tomorrow (1pm-5pm). The nine acres of landscaped gardens were laid out by Lord Ongley in the 1830s, with intriguing garden buildings, ponds, and ornamental ironwork, quixotically determined to evoke the Alps in the unremittingly flat landscape of the Bedfordshire levels. The estate village of Old Warden was built entirely in the Swiss style. Admission £2.50.

Miss Audrey Vockins, who with her niece runs the fine nursery, Foxgrove Plants, is opening her own garden next door to the nursery tomorrow (2-5.30pm). Snowdrops are a speciality as are other spring bulbs, many of them naturalised in her orchard. Admission £1.

In Cornwall, another country entirely at this time of the year, the Viscountess Boyd will be opening the beautifully planted gardens of Ince Castle, three miles south-west of Saltash next Sunday, 24 March (2-5.30pm). Look for the intricately decorated shell house. Admission £1.50.

Since Beth Chatto's triumphant plantings in the former car park at her home in Elmstead Market, Essex, gravel gardens have had a high profile. The English Gardening School has arranged a seminar on 21 March which will cover ways of creating and maintaining a gravel garden. Admission £65. "Foliage with Flowers" is the title of Nan Jenner's talk on 18 April. In the morning she will demonstrate the importance of contrasting these two key elements in border plantings. In the afternoon you can experiment with your own plant groupings. Admission £65. For further information contact the school at the Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Rd, London SW3 4HS (0171-352 4347).

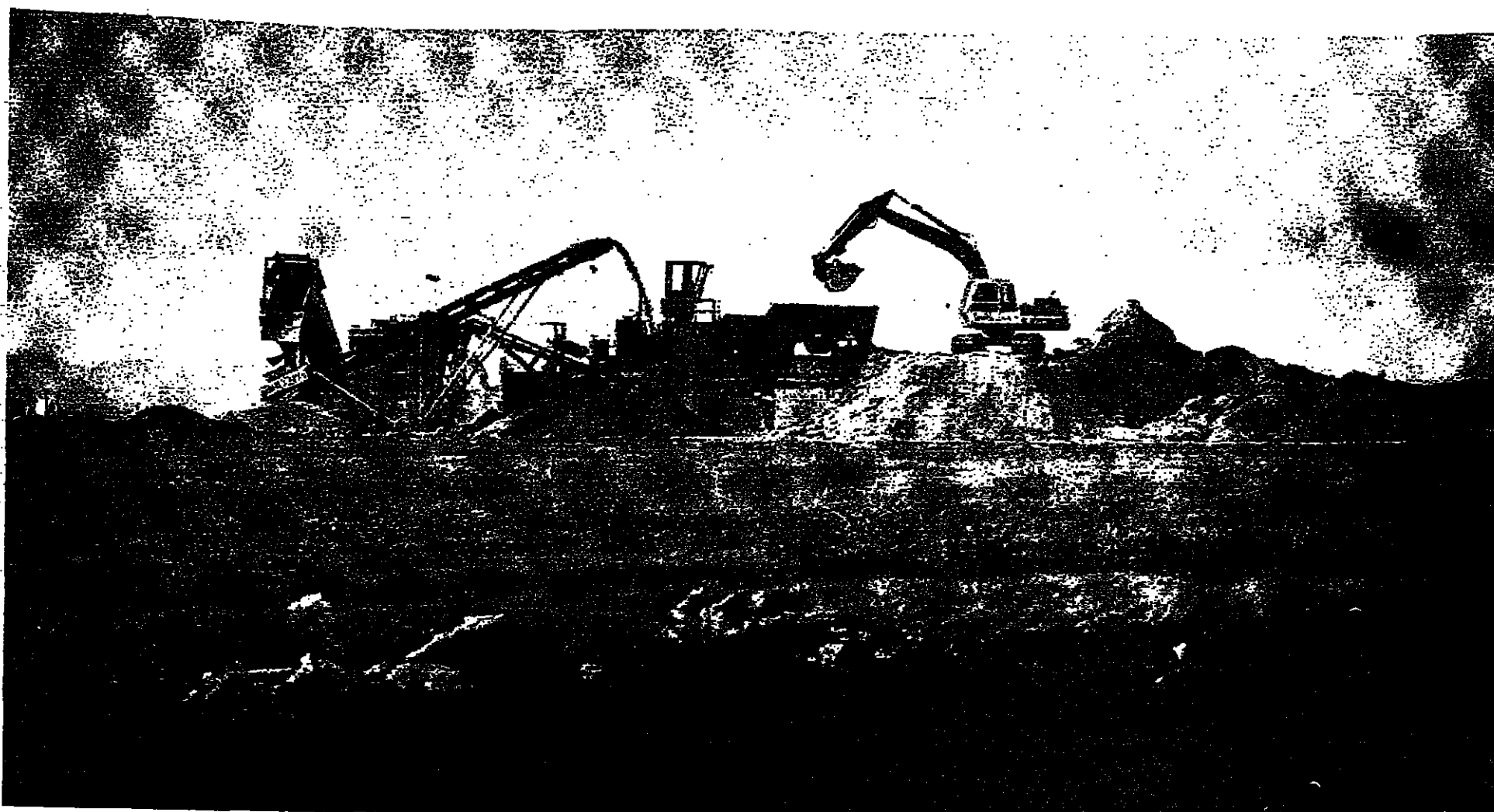
### WEEKEND WORK

There have been few days through the last drear six weeks when digging the vegetable plot has been possible. But it is not ideal to sow immediately after you have dug as the ground needs to settle first.

Plant shallots, if conditions seem propitious, setting them about nine inches apart in rows about 15 inches apart. Sow summer spinach in shallow drills about a foot apart. It does best in rich, moist soil with some shade. Choose a variety with built-in resistance to bolting. In hot dry summers, spinach has a distressing tendency to leap to the sky giving little leaf on the way.

Prune to ground level any shrubs grown for their winter bark, including dogwoods and willows, and shrubs such as the ornamental elders - *Sambucus racemosa aurea*, for instance - that are grown mainly for foliage effect. Complete pruning of trained fruit such as loganberry if you did not do it at the end of last summer. Cut out entirely at the base the canes which bore last year's fruit and tie in the new growths in their place. Cut down autumn fruiting raspberry canes to the ground, and shorten the canes of summer fruiting raspberries by cutting them at a point just above the top wire which supports them.





## Greenham Common is being transformed into a flower-rich heathland. It's an ambitious and fragile project

Endangered habitats By Malcolm Smith

The peace campaigners who spent so much of their lives on the outside of the security fence around Greenham Common Airbase may soon have a fitting epitaph. For the huge concrete runway – the longest in Europe – along which B52 bombers armed with cruise missiles once lurked, is being transformed, bit by bit, into flower-rich heathland.

If all of the four-kilometre-long runway and its adjacent taxi-ways are dug up, 60 or so hectares of heathland – rich with heathers, gorse, knapweeds and gentians – could replace them. The scheme has been promoted by English Nature with the backing of Newbury District Council, and the MoD who still own the land.

Sixty hectares of new heathland may not sound much. But, set in the context of the huge area of this exceedingly rich wildlife habitat destroyed over the last century, it's a substantial reversal in fortunes.

Much of Egdon Heath (immortalised by Thomas Hardy in *The Return of the Native*) has been ploughed up to grow cereals and other crops, planted with conifers, dug out for its underlying gravel, and developed for housing and industry. Some has been lost, too, to scrub encroachment, converting it into wildlife-poorer birch or pine woodland. Only about a fifth of the area Hardy knew still remains, most of it in small fragments.

Such destruction of heathland has happened elsewhere – on the west coast of Wales, in the Brecklands of East Anglia, on the Cornish coast, in Surrey and in Hampshire: the areas of Britain where the habitat is concentrated. Of the 58,000 hectares of lowland heath now left in Britain, over half of it is in England. This is 40 per cent of the European total. Not all of it is protected by wildlife designations or by planning policies.

The Government-appointed Biodiversity Steering Group has recommended an Action Plan for lowland heathland which could cost between half a million and five million pounds a year, depending upon land purchase and man-

### Wildlife sanctuary

Lowland heath is a cornucopia of plants and animals. But more than 80 of its species are conservation concerns. Under threat throughout its world range, the sand lizard – a small, yellow-and-black reptile – has disappeared from most of its former heathland strongholds. The demise and fragmentation of heathland, uncontrolled fires and scrub encroachment, have all done for it.

But a recovery programme, begun in 1994, is succeeding. Sand lizards have been reintroduced to five former sites where their populations are now monitored. The Action Plan – one of many recommended by the Government-appointed Steering Group – proposes their reintroduction to another 10 sites. Including research and monitoring, the cost of recovering the sand lizard is estimated at £80,000 a year, declining to perhaps £65,000 a year by 2010.

agement costs. As a minimum, the Steering Group proposes that all remaining lowland heathland should be protected and properly managed to retain its wildlife and that a further 6,000 hectares should be re-established. Greenham Common is such an example.

Yet even this ambitious programme is comparatively small beer. There is an estimated 67,000 hectares of recently modified heathland ripe for restoration.

"At Greenham," says Dr Wanda Folt, English Nature's Conservation Officer for Berkshire, "as the concrete is removed, the plants from the

heathland surrounding the runways should colonise naturally. We may have to help by spreading some heather seed. The heathland at the base was cut regularly in the past so scrub hasn't been a problem. But outside the base, some of the heath has been taken over by birch."

Heathland developed, often over millennia, from cleared forest. Historically it has been maintained by grazing with cattle, sheep or ponies. An ancient triumvirate of shepherd, sheep and heathland has produced a clutch of names for flowers that colour it, such as Shepherd's Bedstraw, Shepherd's Knot, and Sheep's Bit.

### How to keep heathland healthy

If left to its own devices, heathland will disappear rapidly. Trees (pines and birch in particular) will quickly colonise it, growing into thickets, then converting it to woodland of a type which isn't as valuable for wildlife.

To guard against such natural encroachment, most heaths have to be cut and removed if they have taken over. Light grazing, with sheep or cattle – ponies in some places – needs to be carried out to keep scrub in check. Different grazing densities in different places produce more habitat diversity and more wildlife.

Rhododendron and bracken, both of which can spread rapidly, need to be controlled by cutting or with safe chemicals. Patches of bare, sandy ground need to be created for certain species, such as Yellow Centaury, which is now very rare because its habitat is overgrown.

Lowland heath in summer can be a magnificent extravaganza of purples, yellows, pinks and greens with expanses of common heather, gorse, bell heather, cross-leaved heath and fescue grasses. And all with a scattering of purple knapweeds, orchids, violets and many more plants. All six British reptiles, from smooth snake to sand lizard, are found on it. There are butterflies, grasshoppers, bees and spiders galore. Half of our dragonfly species are found in wetter hollows. But such an environment is not easy to maintain.

Removing grazing, or stopping regular cutting, can have a huge impact on heathland plants. Two botanists, David Pearman and Andy Byfield, have documented such changes by re-creating the plants listed by Professor Ronald Good during surveys of Dorset's heathland in the 1930s.

They found that, of 41 rare heathland plants, all but three of them had declined by half or more. Yellow-flowered Pimpernel, for instance, had declined by 82 per cent; Myrsh Clubmoss, a primitive plant of wet hollows and Pale Dog-Violet, both declined by 88 per cent. Twelve plant species had disappeared altogether.

Some of these losses were the result of the heathland having been obliterated. But many were due to the abandonment of grazing or cutting, and to the loss of bare soil created by animals' hooves or old cart tracks. On the New Forest heaths, where grazing remains a traditional part of the land management, heathland plants have fared much better. Almost all still survive.

Protecting the best heaths with conservation designations is vital. Equally vital is managing them properly to retain their interest, whether this is done by private landowners and farmers receiving management payments through schemes such as Countryside Stewardship in England or directly by conservation bodies such as The National Trust. And, as in the Greenham Common case, recreating more heathland is possible, but at a price.

### COUNTRY LIVES



Gordon Lewis, hill farmer, mid-Wales

“The traditional time to start lambing round here is the second week of March, but we aim to be early because we've got prolific breeds of sheep and we get a lot of spare lambs: if we beat the rush we can sell orphaned ones, no problem. Later on they become harder to shift. The sheep right up in the hills lamb later still – early April – to avoid the worst of the weather.”

We farm cross-bred sheep while most of our neighbours have pure mountain breeds. That's because as a small farm (160 acres in all), we have to be relatively intensive. We aim to get twins off every ewe each year. The downside is there are a lot of problems with multiple births, so we have to bring them indoors for the lambing. Our neighbours have got the acreage to be content with one lamb per ewe so they keep hardy breeds and delay lambing until the weather gets warmer. Then they leave the ewes to get on with it on their own.

During lambing, someone's got to check the sheep every four hours. So I stay up till three in the morning and then Helen, my wife, gets up at five or six. I come out again a couple of hours later and just keep going until late in the evening. Then I grab a snooze in a chair or something until about two and the whole thing starts again.

You can tell a ewe is in labour because she starts to chatter, to lick her tummy and to walk in circles. Most of the time we have to intervene with the delivery – that's the price you pay for multiple births – so I'll push her to the floor and feel inside. At the height of lambing when you can have 30 ewes in one day, everything can get too much. Then my in-laws lend a hand.

If I have a ewe with one dead and one live lamb, I fetch an orphan and smother it in the live twin's placenta. A ewe's maternal instinct is based entirely on smell. Once she has accepted the orphan I leave them to it.

Sometimes we rear the orphans ourselves – last year we had eight. Actually it's not that bad: once you've got a lamb sucking a bottle he's very little work. You've just got to remember to refill the bottle four times a day.

Officially, lambing goes on for about six weeks, but it will go on for quite a bit longer this year because we didn't take the tups out. All our ewes get two chances: if a ewe is barren one year we'll keep her on to the next. We always give one year's grace, even if the ewe is getting on a bit. After two years in a row it's down the road to market – we can't afford to keep them longer than that. This year we're hoping for about 600 lambs from 450 ewes. That's sold, mind, not born – you always lose a few to disease, weather and foxes.

I shear all the sheep myself in late May and early June. That's about 460 of them in all (we don't clip lambs). The wool goes off to Newtown where the Wool Marketing Board sells it for us. It's not worth much – a couple of years back we were only getting a few pence per kilo although it's better now. Harvest is another busy time because we produce all our own silage and hay, but can't afford contractors. That means cutting and baling 45-50 acres on our own.

But lambing is much the busiest time of year for us – it is certainly the most exhausting. You don't find me smiling much during March and April.”

Gordon Lewis was talking to Bel Crewe

### A little local trouble

Ryedale Council is in the dog house, facing accusations of the maladministration of an application for the North of England's first private cemetery. Last year, Farmer Goodwill's Mowthorpe Garden of Rest, an alternative burial site for people wanting their graves marked with trees rather than gravestones, was given the green light. Opposition from villagers fearing that Terrington would become known as The Village of the Dead, prompted a re-think. It was then discovered that the council had failed to advertise the plan properly. Tales of a smog-filled future of up to four burials a day circulated. No one seemed to take any notice of the non-polluting approaches. Mrs Goodwill says they will use biodegradable coffins, and that the area will become woodland within 70 years. The Goodwills were asked to re-submit their plans and the council voted against it. They are taking the matter to the Government's planning inspectorate and are reporting Ryedale Council to the Ombudsman for maladministration.

### A single bark rips out from along the hills

Darkness is coming down, but by degrees so infinitesimal and slow that eye and brain cannot measure its descent. Minute by minute, light drains from the wood. Yet still I can see, and if the deer move at all, this is the time at which they will come.

Perched on a high seat 15 feet off the ground, my back against an ash trunk, I have a panoramic view. Across my knees lies a .243 rifle, for I am trying to cull muntjac, or barking deer – the strange little creatures of Asiatic origin which have colonised much of the south of England.

Recent felling of fir has left this part of the forest pleasantly open. Visibility is good, but colours are fading: green of fir branches, russet of dead bracken, ochre of forest floor – all are turning to the “sober ivory” of Milton's “twilight gray”. While day clings on, I try again to memorise particular lumps: the single rock, the fallen tree trunk, the twisted elder that looks like a deer's head. These are my markers.

Earlier in the afternoon the wind blew viciously



DUFF HART-DAVIS

from the east; but now it has died, and in the stillness every sound rings out. Away to my left front a blackbird is mobbing something – probably an owl, for the call is the high, hysterical chatter aimed at airborne enemies, rather than the low tuk, tuk reserved for predators on the ground.

Movement is what I am looking for. With trees and plants motionless, any movement will take my eye. There – a pigeon sweeps in to roost, landing with a clatter of wings, while a grey squirrel runs out on some late errand flaps along the springy upper branches of a larch.

To sit here in the wood is immensely therapeutic. My eyes and ears are on full alert, but my mind, lulled by the silence, winds down and

reaches out across time. Perhaps 10,000 years have passed since the glaciers of the last ice age pulled back and carved this hill into its present form. Across my front, 50 yards out, run the ruins of an old stone wall. Old maps show the land beyond it as a field: now a dense mass of scrub and young trees covers it. It is from that thicket that I hope the muntjac will emerge.

These barking deer are relative newcomers on the scene. Their ancestors were imported by the eighth Duke of Bedford for his park at Woburn in 1894; but because they did not flourish in captivity, they were released into the wild, and their descendants have spread all over. Another immigrant, still less welcome, is the grey squirrel, brought over from North America in about 1860, and now the greatest menace to forestry in the kingdom.

Who can say what this hilltop will be like a hundred, two hundred, ten thousand years from now? With the onset of night comes a sense of human fallibility, of the transient nature of life on earth.

The day is nearly gone. Binoculars still bring objects into bold relief, but the telescopic sight on the rifle gains light less efficiently, and I can hardly see the cross-hairs. To the naked eye, outlines are becoming blurred: my markers have lost their shapes and are merging into the background.

Then, at last, a definite movement at ground level. Some dark object is coming from right to left, along the line of the ancient wall. Up with the glasses. A fox, framed at one end by its creamy throat, at the other by the white tip of its bush. I watch it pause to sniff a low branch. Then, silent as a shadow, it passes on its way.

A tawny owl hoots. It is time to go. As I reach the foot of the tree, a single bark rips out from along the hill – a muntjac's alarm call or territorial challenge. Ten seconds later another bark echoes into the dark. The animal is too far off to have heard or scented me: it must be feeding with a rival. Nevertheless, I cannot help feeling that its harsh outburst incorporates a message for me as well – meaning, as it does, “Get lost!”

## THE INDEPENDENT

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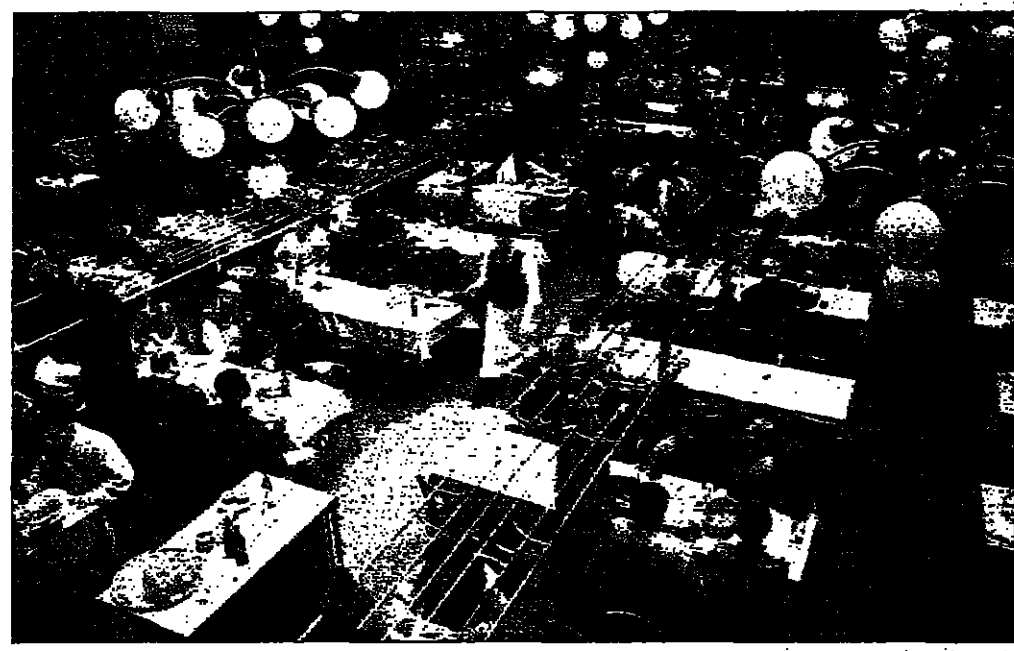
"Paris isn't a place, it's a passion". I was solemnly assured this week by an expatriate Brit in the French capital. But if this is the case, the city risks pricing itself beyond our affections. Our ardour for the City of Light is being dampened by the depressed and depressing state of Sterling. A generation of travellers brought up to believe that there are, and always will be, 10 francs to £1, is having to come to terms with the idea that nowadays you only get seven and a bit to a pound. The £3 cup of coffee (or, worse in every sense, tea) is no longer a cause for heated discussion on the ferry home - it is the norm. Yet while prices in Paris are going through the roof, travelling to the French capital has never been better value. My bus trip from London to Paris and back cost £29; if I had splashed out on a flight, I could have paid as little as £62 return. To boost bookings to the French capital, Air France Holidays has been offering inclusive weekends for the astonishing price of £99 - all of which have been snapped up by bargain-hungry Brits. The problem, as Liz Murray discovered (opposite), is that you can easily spend as much again when you get there. So this guide to budget Paris shows you how to enjoy the city without risking bankruptcy.

Simon Calder

# Enjoy Paris without burning a hole

## HOW TO GET THERE

- 1 Air on British Airways:** London-Paris is the most competitive international air route in the world and, as a result, fares are low. Through your local branch of Lunn Poly, you can get a fare of £69 (including tax) from Heathrow or Gatwick to Charles de Gaulle or Orly. This is not available direct from the airline, which charges £6 more.
- 2 Air on Saturdays only:** the same branch of Lunn Poly should be able to put you on Air India's Saturday flight from Heathrow to Charles de Gaulle, for a total of £62 including tax - possibly the cheapest 747 flight in the world.
- 3 Direct train:** Eurostar (0345 881881) from Waterloo to Gare du Nord. The getaway fare of £59 from Waterloo to the Gare du Nord requires you to spend a minimum of three nights away, and is not available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It is on sale until 28 March. Fares rise to £79 thereafter, if you stay away a Saturday night or three nights. The fare is exactly the same from Ashford, 60 miles nearer Paris, and the only benefit you get is free car-parking (offer applies until the end of the month).
- 4 Train and ferry:** British Rail International (0171-834 2345) sells a £55 return ticket for the Charing Cross-Dover-Calais-Gare du Nord trip. The journey takes a shade over nine hours, not least because of the bus connections required at either port.
- 5 Bus and ferry:** Eurolines (0990 143219) will get you from London to Paris and back for £29, sailing Dover-Calais by ferry. You must travel out and back on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday on the 9am service (scheduled to arrive in Paris at 6pm French time, in London at 4pm British time, but may be later). The offer is barred over Easter and the late May bank holiday. Return any time within a month.
- 6 Hitch-hike:** take advantage of the fact that motorists can take any number of passengers through the Channel tunnel without paying extra. Cost: £0 (in theory at least); time: indeterminate, but allow at least eight hours.



## WHERE TO STAY

- 1 Grand Hotel Malher, 5 rue Malher, 4e (42 72 60 92).** Métro: St-Paul. The sad little sign by the door, reading "We survived the last three months of '95 by chance", shows how tough the winter has been for Parisian hoteliers. On an upland edge of the Marais, the Malher was previously a low-budget hotel that has been renovated and enhanced. Single 470F, double 570F.
- 2 Hotel de la Place des Vosges, 12 rue Birague, 4e (42 72 60 46).** Métro: St-Paul. Quiet, prime, and close to the handsome symmetry of Place des Vosges. Single 315F, double 425F.
- 3 Hotel du Senat, 22 rue St-Sulpice, 6e (43 25 42 30).** Métro: Mabillon. For 601F single or 642F double (breakfast included) you get a big, clean room with a fine balcony and expansive bathroom; more modest rooms are available for around 100F less. Close to St Germain, in a part of town that is too often overlooked.
- 4 Hotel du Centre, 24bis rue Cler, 7e (47 05 52 33).** Métro: Ecole Militaire. The name is misleading, as it is a long hike from the city centre. But rue Cler is a lively pedestrian street, in an area with a pleasing sense of community - more like a provincial village than a Parisian arrondissement. Rooms for 350F, single or double.
- 5 Marais, 2 bis rue Commines, 3e (48 87 78 27).** Métro: St-Paul. In the real heart of the city, reliable value at 360F single, 390F double.
- 6 Hotel St Paul, 43 rue Monsieur-le-Prince, 6e (43 26 98 54).** Métro: Odéon. The reception area is lavished with Haute Epoque furniture, and guarded by the hotel cat. Each room has a bathroom, TV and minibar. The lowest "rack rate" is 480F single, 550F double, but I secured a discount of 100F just by asking.

... and one real cheapie  
**Hotel Savoy, 5 rue Jarry, 10e (47 70 03 72).** Métro: Chateau d'Eau. A short walk from the Gare du Nord, the Savoy is nothing like its namesake in London. This version is all peeling wallpaper and creaking floorboards, but a hot shower is included in the rate of 110F single, 140 double.

## WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

- Breakfast**  
Rachinel pâtisserie, 81 rue Saint-Antoine, 4e (Métro: St Paul). This busy, narrow bakery doubles as a café, and needs a choreographer to shuffle customers queuing for baguettes as others sip vats of café au lait. The mouthwatering selection of cakes and croissants is sold at shop prices, so you can set yourself up for the day for as little as 25F.
- Elevenses**  
If you've travelled on the first Eurostar train of the day, it will deposit you in good time for a coffee and croissant for 10F at the Côté Café, by platform 19 of the Gare du Nord - opposite the tourist office.
- Lunch**  
Chartier, 7 rue du Faubourg-Montmartre (Métro: Rue Montmartre). Big, busy and in the fast lane of the tourist trail, but a good venue for midday fuel. Turn-of-the-century décor and waiting staff.
- Aperitif**  
Café l'Industrie, corner of rue St Sabin and rue Sedaine, 11e (Métro: Bastille). This is the Parisian café you always hope you'll stumble upon: a welcoming haunt, decorated with monochrome photographs and oil paintings. The ambience attracts a trendy crowd these days, and a beer is now 18F; but treat yourself prior to some economy dining.
- Dinner**  
Le P'tit Gavroche, 15 rue Sainte Croix de la Bretonnerie, 4e (tel 48 87 74 26; Métro: St Paul). Dine between 7 and 10pm, and a 48F menu in the centre of Paris (and the middle of the gay area) can be yours. On Wednesday I enjoyed a generous plate of *croquettes* that would have cost 48F alone in many Parisian restaurants, followed by a delicate French version of shepherd's pie and a hearty bread pudding. You need to swallow a half-litre flagon of house Gamay, price 28F, to break the £10 barrier.
- Digestif**  
Majestic Café, 34 rue Vieille du Temple, 4e. A short step in the direction of the Seventies brings you to the handsome mirrors, elegant woodwork and garish lighting of the Majestic, which styles itself "Bar Rock" and plays Bolan and Bowie loud to prove it. Less rowdy options line the same street.

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# in your pocket



Opposite: the Charlier Brasserie, photo: Robert Harding picture library; above, traditional Parisian buildings reflected in the steel and glass of a modern structure, photograph Joe Cornish

## WHAT TO SEE

**1 Père Lachaise cemetery:** terrorist scares in Paris have impacted on this celebrity cemetery. Some gates are closed for security reasons, so the Métro station nearest an entrance is Gambetta rather than Père Lachaise itself. The main attraction is the lead singer of the Doors: Jim Morrison died in Paris in 1971, following a toxic cocktail of drugs. "Let's just say I was testing the bounds of reality," reads one scrawled testimony. Edith Piaf and Oscar Wilde are relegated to supporting acts, but a two-hour guided tour (Tuesday and Saturday, 2.30pm, 35F) puts the place in its proper, theatrical and tragic perspective. Open 8am-6pm.

**2 Jardins de Luxembourg:** a Left Bank oasis, populated by students from the Sorbonne, civil servants and serendipitous tourists.

**3 Galeries Lafayette:** head through the perfume counters, and Art Deco splendour, to the self-service restaurant atop this grand *magasin* - one of the best free views of the French capital.

**4 Notre Dame:** unless you insist on travelling to the top of this great Gothic confection, you can explore freely. The square outside is a terrific place to watch the weird touristic world go by.

**5 Centre Georges Pompidou:** Richard Rogers' and Renzo Piano's assault on Beaubourg still startles, even though half is under wraps and renovation. The centre, and its suspended elevator, opens from noon (10am at weekends) to 10pm - but stays closed on Tuesdays and on 1 May.

**6 Virgin Megastore:** the logo is familiar, but any resemblance between the Virgin Megastore in Paris and a British record shop ends at the front door. An over-enthusiastic staircase ushers you upwards to a chintzy salon purveying Piaf and Pink Floyd. Open 10am (Sundays: noon)-midnight.

## FRENCH DEPARTURES

Competition across the Channel has forced fares down, but as with air tickets you can often save money by buying through a specialist agent rather than direct with the operator.

Researchers for the Independent set out to find the lowest fare from Dover or Folkestone to Boulogne or Calais for two adults and two children (aged over four years old) travelling with a Ford Escort, crossing mid-morning on Saturday 4 May and returning on the evening of Bank Holiday Monday 6 May. Driveline UK (01707 660011) offers a price of £75, including the annual subscription to its Travel Club, travelling on a 60-hour return on P&O from Dover to Calais - less than half the price charged by P&O direct.

Eurostar plans to start accepting bicycles for travel on trains to Paris and Brussels by the end of March. A charge of £25 return is likely to be made. Call 0800 186186 for more details.

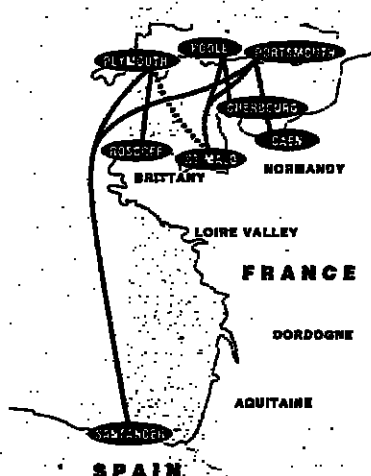
Whichever way you get yourself and your bicycle to France, there are plenty of opportunities when

you arrive. Rough Tracks (07000 569749) specialises in off-road cycling, including a two-week traverse of the Massif Central in France starting 26 June. For £775 you get flights between London and Lyon, accommodation in gîtes and all meals with free wine.

Breton Bikes (a British-run company, based in France - tel 00 33 96 24 86 72) offers a selection of holidays from a week of cycle camping (£210) to a fortnight of hotel stays (£280). Prices include ferry crossings and bike hire.

Riding, fishing and golf are the activities on offer at La Gabelle, a 17th-century farm on the banks of the River Vienne near Chinon, in the Loire Valley of France. Riders can get lessons from instructors at the National Equestrian Centre nearby in Saumur, and visit the Museum of the Horse. Golfers may choose from five nearby courses, including one at Sept Tours where the clubhouse is a château. Anglers can try for roach, chub, carp, perch and lake bream. Call Vincent Hearn (01524 37676) for more details.

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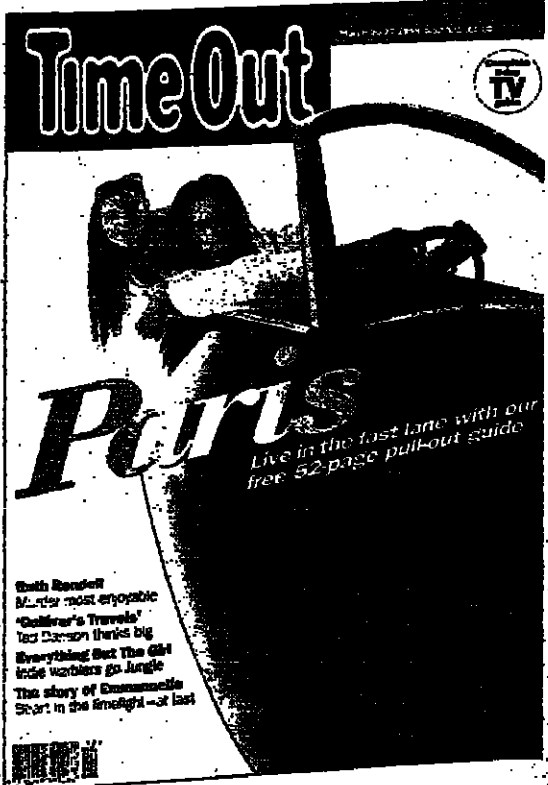
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## ... and a cautionary tale

An early springtime weekend in Paris. What could be more delightful, especially taking advantage of an Air France bargain break with three-star hotel and flight included. But let the thirsty traveller beware! When you tire of strolling along the streets of the Marais or St Germain des Prés and drop into one of the many tempting cafés for a refreshing glass of wine or cup of coffee, prepare to dig deep into your wallet. Our first stop was the famous Les Deux Magots in St Germain - a lovely café which Sartre and Picasso used to frequent. But at 30F (about £4) each for coffee and the equivalent of £10 for two glasses of wine we were taken aback. Still, perhaps it was the smart location. Surely a little stand-up coffee bar would be more reasonable... here the cost was £3 for a coffee, hot chocolate or cup of tea (or that ghastly weak, lukewarm equivalent) and a glass of water £2. These exorbitant prices met us wherever we went, turning a bargain into a potential overdraft break.

Elizabeth Murray

We don't just skirt around the périphérique



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# The Qatari desert: it is just after first light and Patrick Swayze is grinning madly at my bare white legs

By Jonny Beardsall

Shivering in my khaki shorts, it is just after first light and Patrick Swayze is grinning broadly. "You'll wanna get some sun screen on those," he says, looking at my bare white legs. I assure him that most English legs look like this in March. We are in the Qatar desert at the start of a horse race. I wonder what his legs will be like if he makes it to the end of the 26-mile leg-chaffing contest known as the Desert Marathon.

In an Islamic state where a *Dirty Dancing* video would merely raise puzzled looks, this famous name is just another equine tourist. In this land where the Arabian is still king, he, like me, is here for the Festival of the Horse. At the end of a week of shows, feasts and stud visits, the marathon is the gritty last act. And Swayze, a keen breeder, is about to ride in it.

Worth US\$100,000 in prize money, this wacky race lures entries from other Gulf states, the United States, Australia and Europe. With them comes an increasing trickle of first-time visitors to this former British Protectorate, an obscure sandy finger jutting from the western coast of the Gulf of Arabia.

The race begins at 8am at Ras Laffan, a bedouin encampment an hour's drive north from the coastal capital Doha. But with 12 hours of unseasonal rain falling the day before, conditions underfoot beggar belief. The rain has turned the almost straight course over the flat, featureless earth into treacle pudding.

Rain has also caused a serious hoo-ha in Doha and the streets with no drains have become canals. The traffic policeman roll up their trousers as the bow waves from the most bullish four-wheel drives swamp lesser vehicles. The taxi drivers give up and many businesses stay closed. But it is now Friday, the day of rest, and a sizeable chunk of Qatar's genial 400,000 population has made it to watch the race.

It is hot now. The backs of my calves turn pink as mid-morning temperatures nudge 85°F. I see one Qatari jockey struggling to extract his puger, which is bleeping from somewhere inside his headgear. It seems that everyone in Qatar has at least one pager, as well as a mobile phone. With no hands-free facility on a horse, riding alongside such technofreaks looks very dicey. We push on and head for the finish.

Three hours later, long after the winner has been washed off, Swayze appears through the shimmering heat haze. "Hell, I got to do my dream, I rode an Arabian horse in the desert, I'm back next year for sure." He is the best State-side ambassador Qatar will ever find to push desert tourism.



Patrick Swayze — film star, horse breeder and desert racer — sets off on the Qatar International Desert Marathon

Photograph: Jonny Beardsall

But unlike neighbouring Dubai and Abu Dhabi, tourism here is low key. This will change. Doha has hotels, beaches, water sports — the essentials for a family bucket-and-spade holiday — without crowds or crime. The people also have impeccable manners and know how to treat a guest.

However, lack of some facilities might put some people off. Alcohol is available but only in the hotels. Even then, in one

the bar door is discreetly signed "library" and takes some finding. You also need a "library ticket" from reception to get in. There are no obligatory discos, amusement arcades or video shops. So far, it has shunned the worst the West might have to offer.

Yet with sand in spades, the desert is what Qatar does best. And you can even try out a new sport here: sandboarding. A desert hybrid of it's snowy cousin, it

requires complete abandon. With few of the 40 metre high dunes sloping away at less than 45 degrees, beginners will find no nursery dunes. Just attach your booted feet to the board, point downhill, close your eyes and whoosh. Me. I think I'll stick to horses.

This year's Qatar International Desert Marathon takes place on 22 March — and Patrick Swayze will be riding again.



## The Wildest Dreams Challenge

First, build your aircraft. That is precisely what David Cowen of Newcastle-upon-Tyne has been doing for the past three years. Now his two-seat, single-engine canvas aeroplane is complete. He is asking for £6,000 to follow the old Imperial Airways route from London to Darwin.

His application to the Wildest Dreams travel challenge is one of the many being considered. "I have dreamt of such an expedition since childhood, and even though it would be a lot safer and easier in a modern aircraft I have decided to keep to the spirit of the early pioneers and attempt it in a canvas aircraft. To the best of my knowledge, no one has completed the trip in a plane built by themselves."

Others are hoping for great things at lower altitudes. A cycling trip around the world will cost £6,028 per person, according to the application from Graham and Sarah Louise Wood of Cheshire. The mode of transport, says Mr Wood, is crucial: "A bicycle becomes a focus of attention and facilitates becoming acquainted with the local people."

Ian McFarlane of north London plans to keep his expenditure while exploring the Sichuan Route through central China to just £1,300 all in, by using local buses and staying in Buddhist monasteries. If successful, he might be sharing the bursary and Chinese territory with John Wood of Shropshire, who plans a four-month stint in inner Mongolia. "I aim to spend time with the Oroqen, a tribe with a

nomadic hunting culture. The overall aim is to 'live as the locals do' for four months, as inspiration for a book on the tribe."

The story that Peter Thayer of Durham wants to tell is "the first and longest terrestrial journey — retracing the migration route of early humans from East Africa to the southern regions of South America". You could fly in 12 hours, but Mr Thayer is going the hard way: following the Nile to the Mediterranean, around Turkey and along the Volga, across Siberia and the Bering Strait, through Central America and the infamous Darien Gap and then the odd few thousand miles to southern Chile: "Out of Africa to the Land of Fire".

After a trip like that, he may well need a beer.

If you are aged between 18 and 35 you, too, can apply for a share of the £25,000 travel bursary being offered by Heineken Export, in association with The Independent. Forms are available from the special hotline number 0171-231 5432: the Lonely Planet Internet <http://www.lonelyplanet.co.uk> or at STA travel shops. Applications must be received by 26 April. Winners will be announced on 6 May. But if you are planning a trip that leaves before then, don't despair — we will be making interim awards. Which entries win will be entirely at the judges' discretion. One exceptional proposal (say, a tour of the 177 countries where Heineken Export is available) could win the full amount...

## Snow report

"Great skiing at altitude, lower runs getting worn and icy." That just about sums up skiing conditions in most of the Alps this past week. In large parts of the Alps there has been no significant new snow for three weeks, and the strong March sun has begun to take the usual toll, particularly on lower and south-facing slopes. Also, during the last week the fiercely low temperatures of early March have given way to slightly milder conditions. But there is still a good depth of snow on the upper slopes in most areas. Austria had the benefit of light snowfalls early in the week, giving a short-lived boost to even the lowest resorts and producing superb conditions in higher resorts such as Lech and

Obergurgl. To the south, by contrast, the Italian Dolomites are in clear need of snow on the lower runs, particularly where there is no artificial cover. Switzerland and France have good skiing at altitude on offer practically everywhere, although some of the lowest resorts in the northern French Alps are again looking thin. The best skiing in Europe right now is to be had in the Pyrenees — particularly on the north-facing slopes of Barreille-Beret, in Spain, and in Andorra — but with a low in the Mediterranean and weather fronts moving through the Alps, next week is anyone's guess. There is still bags of snow in north America, but milder temperatures have affected the western Canadian resorts a little.

## Snow's up by Chris Gill

# Grooming. That's the key to good skiing

What is the main ingredient in your recipe for a great day or week on skis? I'm just back from 10 days in Switzerland, in the course of which I skied in eight widely differing resorts in widely differing conditions. In February, I skied in seven rather less widely differing resorts in New England. Reflecting on these experiences, I'm in no doubt about my own answer: good snow.

However much importance you attach to scenic drama or village charm or slick lifts, my guess is that what really excites most skiers is the sublime sensation of making silky turns on soft snow, whether it's knee-deep in its natural state, plumped up into pillowy moguls or packed to form a smooth surface. This is something that American resorts understand: it still seems to escape European resort managers.

In three weeks' time, people involved in ski resort management worldwide will be convening in Courchevel to reflect on how resorts have developed up to now and how they may develop in future. The delegates will be spending their mornings inspecting ski-resort hardware, including Kässbohrer piste-grooming machines. They'll be spending their afternoons exploring the world's biggest linked ski area. And they'll be spending their evenings working through a long agenda designed to highlight and analyse the differences between ski resorts.

What amazes me is that the serious evening agenda — full of stuff about positioning resorts in the market and so on — appears to have no connection with what the delegates will be seeing in the morning — piste-grooming machines. The essential

experience that a ski resort offers is skiing on prepared runs, but the quality of that experience is literally not on the agenda.

In most European resorts, piste grooming is something that is done after a snowfall to create a surface accessible to skiers who can't handle deep snow. In America, grooming is something that is done more or less nightly to maintain or recreate a good skiing surface in spite of the effects of sun, cold and the passage of skiers over the trails.

Last week, I skied in some resorts where the blue runs had clearly not been groomed for ages, with the result that any slope too steep to schuss consisted of gentle but hard bumps on which control took a lot of effort, especially for novice skiers. In the States, those slopes would have been restored

every night to a smooth, powdery surface.

I skied in other resorts where the runs had been groomed overnight, but incompetently: the snow had frozen after grooming, leaving a rock-hard surface that was nightmarish to ski in the morning, before the sun had got to work. In the States, in my experience, this isn't allowed to happen. Whether the key is the timing or the techniques of grooming, I don't know, but the results are certainly better.

It's ironic that this convention should be taking place in Courchevel — one of the few resorts in Europe that approaches American standards of grooming. Delegates from America are likely to assume they're seeing a normal European ski area, while delegates from less customer-oriented Alpine resorts are unlikely to notice that they're not.

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# Banks move to the virtual high street

The local branch could soon be in the living room. Paul Gosling looks at on-line schemes

Home computer banking takes another step forward later this month when Bank of Scotland launches a personal computer banking service based on its existing Home and Office Banking Service (HOBS). For the past six months Bank of Scotland has been testing a PC version and it is now ready to go national with the service.

Most of the bank's larger competitors are carrying out research which will lead to a range of PC banking facilities being offered within the next year, but Bank of Scotland is keeping itself ahead of the pack - it has offered computer banking for personal customers for the past 11 years.

Customers who join HOBS, which costs £4 a month, can examine their current, deposit, mortgage and credit card accounts; transfer money between accounts, including placing overnight deposits into high interest accounts; make payments; apply for loans; send electronic mail to their branch or to head office; and obtain financial information, such as current exchange rates.

The facility is operated using a mouse, responding to simple commands. Software is sent free of charge, and customers can dial up the bank direct, avoiding the need to belong to an electronic service provider, such as CompuServe.

A modern is needed, but Bank of Scotland is offering these at a discount price of about £100 to encourage users. Connection is through normal phone lines. Further developments are in the

pipeline. Bank of Scotland is already working on an updated service, which will be quicker and easier to use, to be launched next year. This will be accessed via CompuServe and other service providers, offering additional facilities, including the buying and selling of currencies. Share trading may also be possible as the system develops.

Meanwhile, Nationwide Building Society has been offering a PC banking service since the end of last year, and leading United States banks have been doing the same for two years. Several US banks have formed a partnership with Barclays Bank, Visa and Mastercard in a pilot trial which will result in the first mass market PC banking service being introduced in October. Barclays' initial trial was launched last month, involving 2,500 customers using Barclays' own software for Windows-compatible PCs.

Lloyds, TSB and Citibank customers can participate in another pilot electronic banking scheme. This works only on portable Psion Organisers, enabling customers to pay bills, examine accounts and transfer money between them.

The expectation is that this service will appeal to busy people on the move who want to sort out their finances in a spare five minutes in a hotel room. Suitable Psion machines cost about £250.

Some banks are reluctant to move too quickly towards PC banking, however, because they believe it will be overshadowed by TV banking. NatWest claims to be the world leader in developing tele-

vision banking technology through two pilot schemes currently under way.

One, based in Colchester and Ipswich, uses normal BT phone lines, allied to special phone junction boxes and TV set-top boxes, enabling customers to pay bills, examine accounts, transfer money and do home shopping. A parallel trial is taking place through Cambridge Cable, which will determine whether BT or cable links are the most suitable.

The Co-operative Bank is starting its own TV banking service in partnership with Sky TV from May, with information relayed via the satellite link. This service will allow customers to examine their accounts, but will not permit them to make payments or transfers. It is intended to act as a support to the telephone banking service, but can only be used by customers who also have contracts with Sky TV and have a teletext facility.

Most of the bigger banks already have computer banking systems on offer to businesses, so the purpose of the current trials is less to do with the development of technology than tailoring services to the requirements of personal customers. The assumption some banks are making is that TVs will be more user-friendly, especially as few people currently own modems to allow their PCs to communicate with a bank. Barclays is even considering establishing its own digital TV channel to promote home shopping as well as home banking.


There is no doubt that home computer banking will be firmly established over the

next few years. Recent research has shown that 150,000 people in Britain have now shopped by using the Internet. In the US almost half of high-earning households now have PCs with modems.

"It is a different type of person who uses a PC," says Ian Andrews, senior manager in retail at NatWest. "Market research suggests that PC and on-line service users are members of high socio-economic groups, professionals and students. It is a very attractive market to us. Part of our reason for our trials is to see which of our customers would benefit from which of our services."

A key reason why home computer banking and shopping are on the verge of an explosion is that previous concerns about security have now largely been overcome, thanks to encryption technology developed by the military now being available to commerce. Equally significant is that by the beginning of the next century the distinction between PCs and TVs will probably be blurred, as they are brought together as single multimedia terminals.

When that happens the home banking market will become very exciting, and may lead to the elimination of the high street bank altogether. Multimedia terminals have the potential to do away with cash as well. All we would then need would be "cash cards," used for even the smallest expenditure, carrying a "cash" balance that could be topped up from our multimedia terminal. It is a future that may not be that far away.



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	Yield	Annual Charge	Charges after 3 Years
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M&G	7.6%	1.25%	£405**
Virgin	7.85%	0.7%	£126

**Index PEPs With No Entry Charges**

	Annual Charge	Charges after 3 Years
FIDELITY	0.5%	£90
Gartmore	1.0%	£180
HSBC	1.0%	£180
L&G (for 1995/96 plan only)	0.5%	£90
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**LOOSE CHANGE**

Rates available on guaranteed income bonds have rallied this week in spite of the drop in base rates last week, according to Baron-worth Investment Services. Rates range from 3.9 per cent for a year net to standard rate taxpayers on amounts from £1,000 to £5,000 from Premium Life. 4.9 per cent for two years rising in steps to 6 per cent for 10 years. Free details are available by phoning 100 and asking for Freephone Bondline.

Chelsea Building Society launches a two year fixed rate bond to savers today, paying 7 per cent gross on amounts over £25,000 and 6.75 per cent gross on between £10,000 and £25,000. Rates will be fixed until June 1998, but withdrawals are not permitted until then. A monthly income option is also available.

TSB has launched its 22nd Guaranteed Stock Market Bond this week, which guarantees that all capital is returned in full even if the FT-SE 100 share index falls over the next five years. If the index rises 25 per cent at any time during the bond's five-year life, that gain is also guaranteed. Any additional rises are also allocated to investors and paid free of tax to standard rate taxpayers. An initial charge of 5 per cent is deducted, minimum investments are £2,000 and cannot be increased after the initial investment.

Market Harborough Building Society is offering education remortgage packages to help parents pay the cost of school and college fees. Parents can draw up to an agreed limit when required and pay interest only on amounts used.

Just over half the home valuations carried out by surveyors for Black Horse Agencies, the Lloyds Bank estate agency, in the first two months of 1996 were for people wanting to buy rather than remortgage a property. At the same time last year 75 per cent of the activity reported was for remortgages. This suggests that at least the real level of activity in the housing market is recovering, even if prices have not yet started to move much.

GT Global is launching a Global Bond Fund, a sterling-based unit trust aimed at income and growth from fixed and floating rate bonds world-wide. Managers expect capital gains as inflation and interest rates fall. Minimum investment is £1,000 plus multiples of £50, but the initial charge is 5 per cent, plus an annual management charge of 1 per cent.

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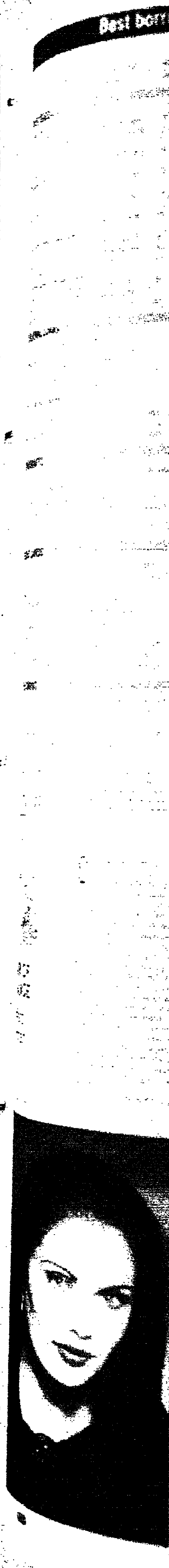
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Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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## Best borrowing rates

Telephone	% Rate and period	Max. adv. %	Fee	Incentive	Redemption penalty
<b>Fixed rates</b>					
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	0.25 for 1 year	70	0.75%	1st 5 yrs: 7.24% sum repaid
Skipton BS	01756 700500	3.75 to 30/4/96	75	£295	1st 5 yrs: 5% of 2's balance
<b>Variable rates</b>					
Norwich & Peterborough	01733 391497	7.24 for 5 years	95	£295	1st 5 yrs: 6 mths interest
Hinckley & Rugby	0800 774499	0.11 for 9 mths	70	—	Free val, 3 yrs unemployment ins
Derbyshire BS	01332 841000	3.64 for 2 years	75	£125	Free val, fee refund, £250 remortgages
Halifax BS	01422 333333	4.45 to 30/4/99	90	—	Free valuation To 30/4/01-£4% of advance
<b>First time buyers fixed rates</b>					
Bristol & West BS	0800 100117	0.95 to 31/1/97	90	£275	To 31/1/01: 6 mths int
NatWest Home Lns	0800 400999	4.19 to 31/3/98	95	£145	To 31/3/01: 5% of advance
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	7.24 to 1/5/01	95	£295	1st 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
<b>First time buyers variable rates</b>					
Principality BS	01222 344188	1.00 to 1/6/97	90	—	To 31/5/01: discount repaid
Coventry BS	0800 126125	3.66 to 1/5/98	85	—	To 1/5/01: 6 mths interest
Abbey National	0800 555100	5.99 to 31/5/01	95	—	Refund valuation fee To 31/5/01: indiv determined
<b>Unsecured</b>					
Direct Line	0141 248 8968	14.90%	—	—	With insurance £114.41
First Direct	0800 242424	14.90	—	—	Without insurance £102.59
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	16.20	—	—	£116.27
<b>Secured (second charge)</b>					
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	8.00	Neg	£3K - £15K	6 mths to 25 years
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 242424	9.30	70%	£2.5K-£100K	3 years - retirement
First Direct	0800 242424	9.50	80%	£3K to neg	Up to 40 years
<b>Unsecured</b>					
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.76	9.5	2.18
Alliance & Leicester BS	0500 955955	Alliance 0.76	9.5	2.20	29.5
Abbey National	0500 200500	Current	0.79	9.9	2.18

Telephone	Account	Authorised	% pm	APR	% pm	Unauthorised	APR
<b>Standard</b>							
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.92%	11.50	—	D
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	1.00	14.00	—	£12
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 161616	MasterCard	—	1.14	14.50	—	D
<b>Gold cards</b>							
Co-operative Bank	0345 122212	Visa	£20,000	0.50M	10.50	£120	£35H
Royal Bank of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05M	14.50M	£35H	£35
NatWest Bank	0800 200400	Visa	£20,000	1.14	15.90	£35	£35

Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods
John Lewis	in store	1.39
Marks & Spencer	01244 681681	1.87A
Sears	in store	1.94

APR Annualised percentage rate.  
 A 1.53% (19.9% APR) for 0% bal over £1K.  
 D No interest free period.  
 E Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged 22 years.  
 H Annual fee waived after first year if 50%+ charged to card during previous year.  
 M Equivalent to base rate.  
 All rates subject to change without notice.

## Best savings rates

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
<b>INSTANT ACCESS</b>					
Portman BS	01202 252444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.8% Year
Supton BS	01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£2,000	5.1% Year
Supton BS	01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£10,000	5.2% Year
Supton BS	01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£20,000	5.3% Year
<b>INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS</b>					
Buckinghamshire BS	01494 873064	Children's Card	Postal	£1,000	5.5% Year
Leeds & Holbeck BS	0113 243 8292	Albion	Postal	£10,000	5.5% Year
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Telephone	£10,000	5.5% Year
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Telephone	£25,000	5.5% Year
<b>NOTICE ACCOUNTS &amp; BONDS</b>					
Manchester BS	0161 834 9465	45 Day	45 day	£25,000	6.5% Year
Bradford & Bingley BS	0345 248248	Direct 95	90 day P	£10,000	5.8% Year
Bradford & Bingley BS	0345 248248	Direct 95	90 day P	£20,000	7.2% Year
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	120 Account	120 day	£5,000	6.5% Year
<b>MONTHLY INTEREST</b>					
Britannia BS	01538 392808	Capital Trust	Postal	£10,000	5.1% Month
Manchester BS	0161 834 9465	45 Day	45 day	£10,000	6.5% Month
Bradford & Bingley BS	0345 248248	Direct 95	90 day P	£10,000	6.5% Month
Bradford & Bingley BS	0345 248248	Direct 95	90 day P	£20,000	7.0% Month
<b>FIXED RATE BONDS</b>					
Sun Banking Corp	01438 744505	Investment Certs	1 yr term	£1,000	6.25% Maturity
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Fixed Rate Bond	1 yr term	£10,000	6.75% Year
Stroud & Swindon BS	0345 252422	Fixed Rate Bond	2 yr term	£2,000	7.0% Year
Sun Banking Corp	01438 744505	Investment Certs	5 yr term	£1,000	7.45% Year
<b>GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS</b>					
Kleinwort Benson	01202 502504	HICA	Instant	£2,500	5.2% Month
Alliance & Leicester BS	0116 271 7272	Alliance	Instant	£5,000	5.5% Month
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	5.5% Month
Robert Fleming/SAP	0800 829024	Higher Rate Deposit	Instant	£10,000	5.9% 3 Month
<b>GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (cont)</b>					
Premium Life	0800 414111	1 year	£10,000	4.80% Year	
Premium Life	0800 414111	2 year	£10,000	5.50% Year	
Premium Life	0800 414111	3 year	£10,000	5.75% Year	
Premium Life	0800 414111	4 year	£10,000	6.15% Year	
Premium Life	0800 414111	5 year	£10,000	6.50% Year	
<b>OFFSHORE</b>					
Northern Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Offshore Instant	Instant	£25,000	6.70 Year
Northern Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Offshore Instant	Instant	£50,000	6.90 Year
Alliance & Leicester (JOM)	01624 663566	Investment Bond	1 yr term	£25,000	6.95 Year
B'ham Midshires, Guern	01481 700680	Fixed Account	£1,000	6.50 Year	7.25% Year
<b>INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS</b>					
Investment Account		1 month	£20	5.00 Year	
			£50	5.50 Year	
			£25,000	5.75 Year	
Income Bond		3 month	£2,000	6.25 Month	
Capital Bond	Series J	5 year	£100	6.65 F Year	
First Option Bond		12 month	£1,000	6.25 F Year	
			£20,000	6.50 F Year	
Pensioner's Guaranteed Income Bond	Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00 F Month	
NS Certificates (tax-free)		5 year	£100	5.35 F Maturity	
43rd issue		5 year	£100	2.50 + RPI	
9th Index linked					
Manitry					
Children's Bond	Issue H	5 year	£25	6.75 F Maturity	

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**FEAR OF FINANCE**  
 Clifford German

Change is set to take another giant stride through the building society industry this autumn if the Government's planned reforms are not overtaken by political developments. The proposals would put foreign buyers on a level playing field with UK institutions when it comes to taking over building societies and more details are set to be circulated for discussion on Monday. If it goes ahead as planned a new set of medium and small societies too small to carry the costs of converting into banks and diversifying their business will be put into play and become potential targets for mergers and takeovers. Mergers of roughly equal

parties to form larger mutuals are unlikely to generate any bonus bonanzas for members. But pre-emptive takeovers by UK banks, which are finding it hard to match the more aggressive mutuals like Nationwide and Bradford & Bingley, are now quite probable. It might well be cheaper for quoted lenders to buy up the cut-rate mutuals rather than compete with them. Foreign lenders would certainly need to offer some sweeteners to persuade members of mutuals to succumb, but the evidence suggests that every borrower and saver has his or her price, and it is not very high - perhaps £500 to persuade them to sell out their mutual society membership.

Perhaps half a dozen societies led by the Bristol & West could be taken over, although it is much less obvious which are the most likely candidates now than it was a year ago. Change is also taking another step through the financial services industry, this time through insurance. Legal & General this week announced its intention to follow the Pru in offering its customers a basic banking service in the form of simple savings accounts which customers can use to build up a pot of money. The company hopes this will then be used to buy its mainstream insurance-linked investment products. In the same week the Prudential announced its intention to follow Legal & General and distribute some of its surplus assets to its "investors". These are known as "orphan" assets because they are surplus to the funds needed to meet the claims and pay out the policies, and are now said to be available to pay out sweeteners and make the business stronger and/or more attractive. Although both the Pru and Legal & General have identified several hundred million pounds worth of orphan assets, they have to be compared with very large numbers of individual policyholders and shareholders in both institutions. Individual payouts are likely to be measured in hundreds of pounds rather than

tens of thousands. Deciding how to share them out between policyholders and shareholders is in itself a potential minefield for quoted insurance companies, which mutual insurers do not face. Shareholders own the business but the policyholders are the customers, whose loyalty is the basis of the future growth. If the distribution is botched it could create more ill-will than goodwill. There is also the risk of disposing of assets which may be of priceless value in tiding the companies through future as yet unforeseen financial difficulties. Given the potential for getting it wrong, the insurers might be forgiven for deciding to use the money to finance business development.

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## money peps

# Inflation is still low. Is it time to head for corporate bonds?

Liam Robb offers a guide for investors looking to for a better performance

Over the past few years, while inflation has been low, bonds have actually given a higher return than equities and the Chancellor's decision last summer to allow corporate bonds to be payable was seen by the investment industry as a godsend.

There are two types of corporate bond PEPs. The vast majority – there are currently about 50 – are pooled unit trusts which invest in a range of fixed-interest securities with varying redemption dates. The problem is that as bond prices go up, their yields drift down and income flows and redemption prices from pooled vehicles can only be predicted – not guaranteed.

One alternative is Sun Alliance, which has recently launched the Daisy PEP. For a 5 per cent initial charge, the manager will guarantee repayment of capital if the fund is held for six years.

However, an increasing number of single corporate bond PEPs are arriving on the market. These offer the opportunity to invest in a single fixed-interest stock with a known redemption

date and price (providing the bond is held until maturity) and a known yield which will be paid irrespective of prevailing interest rates.

General Accident, for example, has packaged National Grid debt in a corporate bond growth PEP which pays no dividend but promises a tax free return on the original investment plus 50 per cent growth at August 2002 (offer closes 26th March). Some companies have marketed their own debt – Legal & General was the most successful, raising £130m in a guaranteed bond plan which offered 7.0 per cent fixed 5.5 years or 4.5 per cent growth. This issue is now closed although further issues are being considered.

Corporate bonds offered by building societies or banks are not eligible for inclusion in PEPs. However, Johnson Fry has packaged various building society securities within its Chip 5 fund offering a guarantee of capital repayment after five years. The yield is 6.3 per cent (equivalent annual return for basic rate tax payers of 7.88 per cent). The offer closes 18 March.

However, seduced by low interest rates at the bank, most companies are not particularly hungry for debt at the moment and the administrative difficulties of marketing their own debt within a PEP scheme ensures that such vehicles are rare.

It is possible for private investors to pick their own corporate bond and transfer it to a self-select PEP scheme. There is no shortage of choice with Eurosterling bonds available from most of the large quoted companies like Tesco, ICI or PowerGen. However, it is not necessarily possible for a broker to buy the bond in exactly the denominations a client needs. In addition, many domestic UK bonds do not have credit ratings so it can be difficult for private investors to assess the risk they are taking on.

Hargreaves Lansdown Asset Management has overcome some of the problems by buying single corporate bonds in bulk – normally those which are trading at or under par – and then packaging them in denominations which suit potential PEP buyers. There are savings to be

made because of the economies of scale and the bonds on offer vary from week to week.

The company is currently promoting two: Eastern Electricity, which has a very long 30-year redemption date but which nonetheless offers an impressive gross redemption yield of 9.4 per cent, and Glaxo, which yields 8.77 per cent. The yields are guaranteed and are considerably higher than most of the pooled unit trusts. Perpetual's PEP bond fund, for example, which was voted top investment product for 1995 by independent financial advisers, is currently yielding 7.3 per cent.

Many management companies believed that the natural market for corporate bond PEPs would be those who were in, or nearing, retirement. In fact, as Peter Hargreaves, chairman of Hargreaves Lansdown has discovered, the products are attracting investors of all ages. However, as Amanda Crowley of Allenbridge Group explained, a high yield should not be the only consideration. "The yields on single corporate bonds and the capital repayment at the end of the term are only guar-

anteed while the company is still in business," she said. "The reason they are yielding more is simply because they are much riskier vehicles."

Graham Hooper of independent financial advisers Chase de Vere also urged caution. "We would want to look at each issue on its merits and certainly wouldn't advocate investors going into single corporate bonds for the sole reason that they are yielding more," he said. "The collapse of Barings has shown that having all your eggs in one basket is not necessarily a good idea. For the less risk-averse investor however, certain single corporate bonds may well be worth considering."

Johnson Fry  
0171-451 1000  
Hargreaves Lansdown  
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Sun Alliance 0500-100 333  
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Money Marketing, 23rd November 1995.

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Source: Legal & General Investment Management. \*£150 charges assume that the free PEP offer is taken advantage of.

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## Don't get caught out by charges

By Clifford German

Independent research shows that most investors choose a PEP for the published yield it offers, and often ignore the charges they will have to pay, which are deducted from the PEP regardless of how it performs. Until recently, it was quite normal for some PEP providers to pocket as much as 5.5 per cent of the investor's cash and invest only the balance, as well as charging an annual management charge of up to 1.25 per cent a year plus VAT to run the fund. You do not have to be a financial wizard to see that could work out more expensive than paying 25 per cent income tax if the dividends yielded less than 5 per cent.

But new providers like Virgin and Marks & Spencer quickly saw that simplicity and a no-frills approach would attract investors who were suspicious of the traditional investment mumbo-jumbo, and they have used low charges as a direct sales point. In the last 12 months competition has led most of the mass-market providers to reduce initial charges and several big providers have abolished them altogether. Only the specialist providers who can boast good past performance can now get away with big charges.

Most of the new corporate bond PEPs have had no initial charges, although some deduct their annual

charges from the income while others take it off the capital in order to maximise the published yield from the dividends at the expense of the capital value.

The new wave of index tracker funds introduced by Virgin, Legal & General and HSBC/James Capel, have also used the fact that they do not need an army of analysts to pick winners if they are simply aiming to match the stock market as a whole, and can therefore eliminate initial charges.

Main corporate bond PEP providers like Legal & General and Fidelity now charge as little as 0.50 per cent to manage funds. Some independent financial advisers like Best PEP offer investors a rebate on their commission, which further scales down the cost of buying a PEP.

Investors in self-select PEPs face a management charge if they want the stockbroker to manage the portfolio and to collect the tax which will have been deducted at source. If they want to buy and sell shares in their portfolio they will also have to pay a dealing commission to the broker.

Nowadays investors can be pretty sure the tax-free income and gains from investing through a PEP will more than justify the residual charges. But everyone should be aware of the charging structure as well as the performance figures before they buy.

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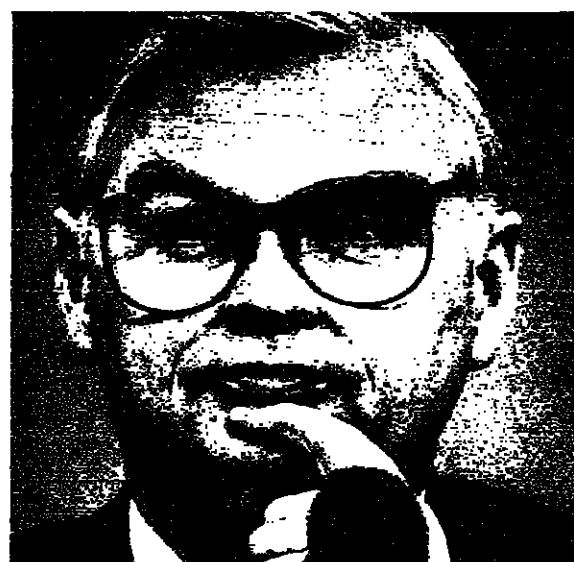
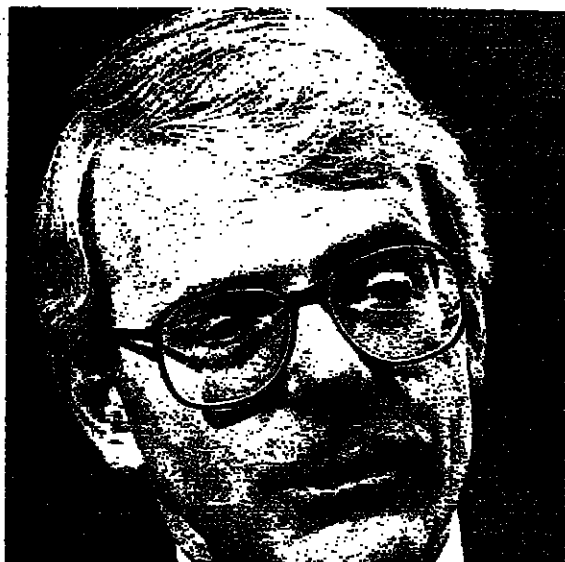
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# Are you getting your share?

PEPs are still the most advantageous way for big and small investors to buy equities. Clifford German looks at what's on offer



PEPs have outlasted four Chancellors so far. Nigel Lawson, John Major, Norman Lamont and the current incumbent, Kenneth Clarke

It really does make sense for small investors who want to buy and hold shares (and not just stag new issues) to invest through a Personal Equity Plan. Dividends on shares held in a PEP are not liable to income tax, and any gains made on disposal are exempt from capital gains tax. PEPs make sense for small investors and they make even more sense for big investors, who are otherwise liable to higher rate tax on share dividends and who regularly expect to make capital gains in excess of their annual tax-free allowance.

PEP holders do not even need to declare the income or the gains on their tax forms. And unlike Tessas (Tax-Exempt Savings Accounts), which lose their tax-free status if the capital is withdrawn in the five-year life of the account, PEPs can be cashed at any time without losing the tax advantages they have already earned.

PEPs have been around since 1987, and anyone who bought the maximum amount allowed each year could have invested £64,000 and with average luck should now be sitting on a tax-free portfolio worth at least £100,000 and perhaps £30,000 worth of tax-free dividends.

The annual investment limits have increased over the years – and the choice of investments has widened – so that anyone over 18 can now put up to £6,000 during the tax year ending 5 April into a PEP which invests in a spread of shares, plus a further £3,000 each year can be invested in the shares of a single company.

Since last July investors have been able to choose between a PEP invested in shares and a corporate bond PEP

which invests in fixed-interest loan stocks issued by UK companies and the UK government gilts.

You do not have to invest the maximum sum to get a PEP. You can usually invest as little as £500 as a lump sum, or put from £20 a month into a regular savings PEP. You can buy a PEP off the page from an advertisement, you can buy one through a retail stockbroker, or get an independent financial adviser (IFA) to buy one for you. If you are in any doubt about where to start, both the Association of Unit Trusts (Auit) and the Association of Investment Trust Companies (Aitc) will be happy to send you a free fact sheet and a list of providers.

In practice, most PEPs are invested in a unit trust or an investment trust, which gives you a spread of investments, and you can monitor their performance from the prices listed in the main financial papers. You can choose a PEP which is intended to maximise dividend income, usually one with the words high income or extra income in its title; or you can choose one which is designed to produce capital gains, or one which tries to secure a happy medium; you can choose distribution PEPs which pay out the tax-free income or accumulation PEPs which reinvest the dividends.

These days you can also choose income shares in certain "split-level" investment trusts, which entitle you to the bulk of the dividends on the assets, while someone else gets the capital appreciation. Or you can choose tracker funds which select their investments to follow, almost exactly, the performance of a specific stock market index, usually the FTSE 100 share index or the All-Share index. There are also

a few "guaranteed" PEPs, like the Legal & General corporate bond, which deliver a fixed yield, and others which lock in capital gains.

Including corporate bond PEPs, there are now more than 2,000 different PEP plans you can choose from, almost as many as there are companies whose shares are listed on the stock market. But you can also use a self-select PEP as a way of investing directly in the stock market while still benefiting from the tax advantages of a PEP. You instruct a stockbroker which shares to buy and sell, and when to do so – but the shares are held in your PEP. More and more stockbrokers offer this service – and the cut-price share-dealing services will do it at their standard fee or less.

Which kind of PEP you choose depends on whether you want to maximise income or chase capital gains, or a combination of both. But you should remember that tax-free dividend income from a PEP benefits virtually all investors, while most investors are already exempt in practice from capital gains because they do not realise £6,000 of gains anyway, and only the top 10 per cent or so will benefit from exemption. For most small investors therefore it makes sense to go for income from a PEP and go for gains outside the limits of a PEP plan.

It is estimated that around 14 per cent of the adult population now has a PEP, compared with the 16 per cent who have a Tessa. But while most investors are limited to a total holding of £9,000, PEP investors can invest up to £9,000 every year.

PEPs must invest directly in ordinary, preference or con-

vertible preference shares in companies based in the UK, or the European Union provided they are listed on a recognised stock market, or in corporate bonds or convertible loan stock of UK companies which are priced in sterling, pay fixed rates of interest and have at least five years left before they mature.

That includes Eurosterling bonds issued by UK companies offshore, but excludes bonds issued by companies in the financial sector such as banks. But PEPs can be invested in unit trusts or investment trusts which invest at least half their funds in qualifying assets.

As a further dispensation investors can get some exposure to the US, Japan or emerging markets by putting up to £1,500 out of their £6,000 allowance into unit trusts or investment trusts which do not qualify – provided that any further investment in the same year is managed by the same provider.

You can only buy one PEP (or one equity PEP plus one bond PEP) each year, but you can buy from a different provider each year, and you can transfer your PEPs to another manager each year. But you cannot simply set up your own PEP. You have to go to a bank, building society, stockbroker or one of the new providers such as Virgin or Marks & Spencer.

Investors must remember that PEPs, like shares, can fall as well as rise, and providers can deduct initial charges, exit charges and annual management charges, which have to be set against your tax-free advantages, but even these are falling as a result of competition.

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## money peps

# The heavyweights slug it out over your savings

Alison Eadie looks at the performance and investment philosophy at the institutions which pull in the big money

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The PEP selling season is reaching its annual crescendo, and indications are that it has been a good one. M&G, Schroders and Perpetual, three of the largest unit and investment trust providers, have pulled in impressive sums of money with their new issues.

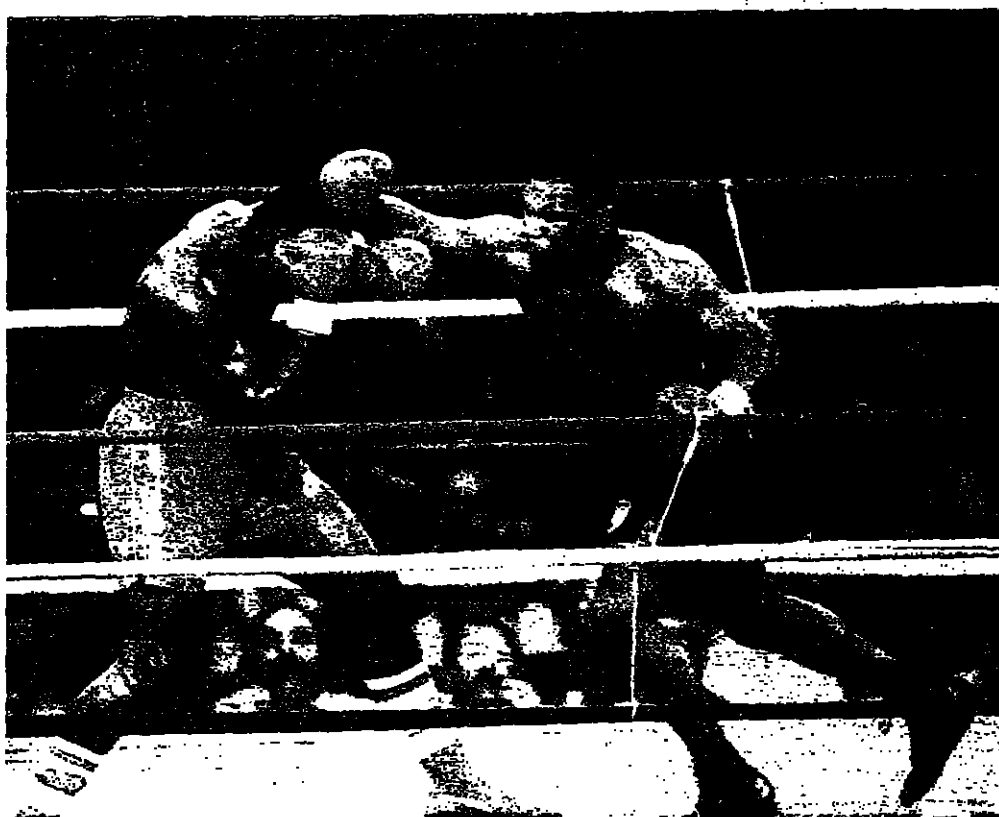
Fidelity, another heavy-hitter, has repackaged three existing unit trusts into the Triple Performance PEP for investors wanting some overseas exposure. All four houses have played to their strengths, launching issues based on existing flagship funds with strong performance records and managed by star fund managers. The performance message has been backed by hefty advertising and promotional budgets, although no larger than usual for the time of year. Perpetual this year experimented with billboards for the first time.

While nobody disputes the power of advertising there has to be something worth selling. Advertising cuts less ice with independent financial advisers whose recommendations sell many PEP plans. The better ones carefully monitor fund management groups and switch clients out of funds they no longer believe are up to scratch.

David Mossop, chief executive of Perpetual, says, "We got to where we are today through investment performance. That is what we hang our hat on."

Perpetual does not have a fixed investment philosophy, but embraces a cross section of beliefs and adapts with the times, he says. He adds that Perpetual's ability to offer good service as a result of heavy spending on information technology is also important.

Track record is the recurrent theme. Bridget Cleverly, assistant director of Schroder Investment Management, says, "The overriding reason why we are big, is because of our outstanding performance record in the UK." Schroders with £9.7bn under management has recently overtaken M&G as the largest UK unit trust house.



Big hitters: Like Bruno and Tyson, the leading contenders in the PEP market have a fight on their hands

M&G, the UK's largest pep provider and oldest unit trust house, has an investment philosophy which emphasises the long term. Roger Jennings, marketing manager, says consistent out performance of stock market indices by the flagship Recovery Fund and Dividend Fund unit trusts over 10 and more years is very important to M&G.

Demonstrating performance can boost smaller fund managers into the big league quite quickly. Morgan Grenfell does not figure among the top 10 PEP providers, but is taking in new money fast. The reason has much to do with its top performing European unit trusts - European Growth and Europa - and its UK Equity Income unit trust, a consistent top 10 performer in its category. Julia Eynon, marketing manager, explains the investment philoso-

phy as a stock-picking approach that "wears out the shoe leather" in company visits. "We choose companies with the best potential," she explains.

The other big providers are high street banks, which sell through branches rather than direct advertising or independent advisers.

Paul Ashby, marketing manager at Barclays Unicorn, the unit trust business of Barclays Bank, says: "Our brand is a big factor for first time buyers. Investors who have not heard of Perpetual or Schroders will come to us."

That dictates investment philosophy, which is not to take big risks and not to develop specialised funds. Unicorn's flagship General Trust is, as its name suggests, a big broadly-based trust reflecting the stock market and aimed at people investing in equi-

ties for the first time. Its other top seller is the Gilt and Fixed Interest Income Trust, a 15-year-old trust which fits into the new corporate bond PEP category. Barclays now counts itself the biggest in the market for corporate bond PEPs with £130m under management. Mr Ashby points out that the Gilt Trust also wins awards for performance and as a result has given Unicorn a foothold in the IFA market.

Lloyds Bank's self-select PEP is its flagship product with £786m invested. Derek Booker, a senior PEPs manager, says Lloyds is the biggest provider of self-select PEPs and offers competitive pricing and low cost switching. Its unit trust PEPs are positioned for steady growth rather than high performance.

With caution in mind, Lloyds this month launched its Millen-

nium Fund, a capital-protected PEP. It will invest in FT-SE 350 companies and on its fifth anniversary will pay back the guaranteed original investment plus the intervening stock market growth. Debbie Gorski, marketing director of Black Horse Financial Services, says, "In the past, some people may have been put off PEPs by the risks to their capital of investing in the stock market. The Millennium Fund offers the growth potential of the stock market, together with the reassurance that if customers hold the investment until 14 June 2001 and encash on that date, they will get back at least their original investment."

Although the big are getting bigger, size is not everything in the PEPs market. Recent entrants like Virgin and Marks & Spencer prove that investors are happy to give money to groups which made their reputations in areas other than financial services. Virgin is snapping at the heels of long established fund managers with £174m already in its tracker and corporate bond peps. It has pinned its colours to the mast of low charges, whereas M&S has gone the route of guaranteeing a return of capital on the fifth anniversary. Like the banks, M&S is selling through its stores.

Catching investors and keeping them is the name of the PEPs game. Repeat business is crucial. Both Schroders and M&G estimate that a good half of subscribers for their latest issues were previous and clearly satisfied customers.

### Large and growing providers

	Total PEP Assets
M&G	£2.3bn
Perpetual	£2.0bn
Barclays	£2.0bn
Lloyds	£1.5bn
Fidelity	£1.0bn
TSB	£850m
Schroders	£820m
Virgin	£174m

\*Excludes self-select PEPs held by Fleming's Strategic Source: company estimates

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## What's inside the tax-free wrapper?

By Liam Robb

The great bulk of money placed in PEPs is actually invested in new or existing unit or investment trusts which are assigned to a PEP "wrapper". So the most frequent choice a PEP investor needs to make is between a unit trust and investment trust to invest in.

The fundamental difference between the two vehicles is that investment trusts are closed ended and unit trusts are open ended. At the beginning of an investment trust's life, the manager will have a specific amount of money to invest and the value of the entire fund - which is listed on the Stock Exchange like any other share - will fluctuate with market sentiment.

If the market believes the future is bright, the trust may trade at a premium to the actual net asset value (NAV) of the fund's underlying investments. At other times it may trade at a discount - a frustrating quirk which can result in the value of the shares falling despite the fund manager having performed well.

Unit trusts, on the other hand, issue units to buyers rather than shares. The fund is not listed on the Stock Exchange and if there are more buyers than sellers then the fund manager will have to invest that additional money. Conversely, if investors are net sellers of the fund, the manager will have to liquidate some of the investments in order to pay them back. The size of the fund will therefore expand and contract and the price of the units is adjusted each day to reflect the net asset value of the underlying portfolio; investors know they are buying at "fair value" and for this reason many people feel more comfortable with unit trusts.

"Asking whether you should be in investment trusts or unit trusts is the wrong question,"

said Jason Hollands, director of PEP analysts, Best Investment. "The real question is: which sector should you be in and which is the best fund within that sector?"

Most investors plump for unit trusts, although this is partly as a result of strong marketing by unit trust managers. Inevitably, these costs will impact on the initial management fee - 5 per cent is typical - and investors may ask whether they wish to pay for this - particularly as most investment and unit trust managers have underperformed the FT-SE All-Share over the past five years.

A perception persists that investment trusts are the reserve of more sophisticated investors. They tend to be more specialist and to some extent more risky vehicles since there are virtually no restrictions on what shares or securities an investment trust portfolio can hold; unit trusts are obliged to hold a minimum of 90 per cent of their portfolio in securities listed on recognised stock exchanges.

A more important legal difference between the two vehicles is that, unlike unit trusts, investment trusts are permitted to "gear" - to borrow additional funds to purchase investments. Gearing, as the name suggests, has the effect of exaggerating the returns of the fund.

Independent financial adviser Chase de Vere has undertaken research which shows that, because of the gearing effect, investment trusts will, to varying degrees, outperform unit trusts in bull runs but will underperform when markets are depressed. However, since most markets tend over the long term to be bull markets (the FT-SE 100, for example, now stands at around double what it was 10 years ago, despite the devastating crash of September 1987), surely this would imply that



What's in the wrapper? The usual choice for investors is between a unit trust and investment trust

investment trusts offer better value?

Investment trust performance statistics are always based on the mid-price. With offer-to-offer calculations, unit trusts' initial and annual management fees are ignored. On an offer-to-bid basis they are included and their performance suddenly looks far less impressive.

Most advisers favour investment trusts above unit trusts under two circumstances: when they are trading at what seems to be an unnecessarily high discount to NAV and when markets are volatile.

Investors tend to move in herds and will buy or sell particular stocks or sectors en

masse. Although some of the fund can be kept in cash, in a volatile environment unit trust managers are forced to buy near the top of the market and sell near the bottom - a complete contradiction to investment theory which could adversely affect the overall performance of the fund.

A pebble hybrid offering the best of both vehicles would seem to be the answer and that answer should arrive this July in the form of Open Ended Investment Companies (Oeics - pronounced "oiks" to the industry's dismay).

Like unit trusts, Oeics will be valued according to the underlying assets but investors will be issued with shares rather than units.

Another important difference is that Oeics will have a single price for both buyers and sellers rather than a bid-offer spread, which should make the job of comparing competing funds considerably easier. Expect increasing piles of Oeic promotional literature to land on your doormat as summer approaches.

Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (AUTIF)  
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## How investors can have their income cake and eat it

By Chris Whittingslow

Falling interest rates are putting the squeeze on investors who rely on savings, threatening them with a choice of selling assets or reducing living standards. But there is an alternative. It is to buy the "income shares" issued by a certain kind of investment trust known as a "split level trust". These shares take the lion's share of all dividends from the investment trust. Dividends are still on an upward trend, unlike interest rates. So they can provide a very high income - typically around 11 per cent at the moment.

They can give you just as much income as an annuity, without involving the sacrifice of all your capital. They enable you to have your income cake and eat it too. And, as dividend income grows, you still have the possibility of seeing your income grow too. You won't get the sort of capital growth an equity income fund tends to produce, but you should retain a decent sum to hand on to your family.

And if you change your mind there is nothing to stop you selling your income shares and either investing in something else or simply spending some of the money.

In recent years the emergence of unit trusts investing entirely or mainly in a portfolio of income shares has transformed income shares from being the preserve of wealthy individuals and financial institutions into an investment which the average person can now consider. Unit trusts based on income shares can also be held in a Personal Equity Plan, which adds tax advantages to the attractions of a high income.

If you invested your full PEP allowance of £6,000 in an income share fund which yielded 10 per cent a year for 10 years you could hope to have net income over that period of £600 a year, or £6,000

in all. On this the cumulative tax saving, on current rates of income tax, would be between £1,200 and £2,400. You would certainly be getting full value out of the PEP's freedom from income tax.

Chris Whittingslow is investment director of Exeter Fund Managers (01392 412144)

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staying in

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>Television</b> The Life 9.45pm BBC2. (above) Twentysomethings, that generation sandwiched between baby-boomers and "yup" get a shot in this new "continuing drama" (don't read "soap") about a group of London flatshareers. Friends without the laughs, to put it mildly. But not bad (180370). Film: <i>Hole-in-the-Wall</i> (180370). 11.00pm C4. Highly entertaining comedy with newly married Sarah Jessica Parker finding herself torn between hunky Nicolas Cage and sly gambler James Caan (140311).	Without Walls 9pm C4. Janet Street-Porter says "Because the Internet of being a cultural sponge for satirical anecdotes, if that is the case, then surely she should be saying 'yup' (140311). And the Best Goes On 10pm C4. (above) Phil Redmond's first foray into period drama, the period being Liverpool in the early Sixties. Stars Jenny Agutter and Sami Brookes (1538722). Big Mouth 11.05pm C4. It's that Tony Parsons again, in a new cultural chat show with the emphasis on the optional (184567).	Modern Times 9pm BBC2. (above) A cautionary tale for anyone who's seen <i>Waiting for Godot</i> , fancied getting it together with a heroin addict, it ended with being doused in petrol and set alight for Tracy, when thugs came looking for her juvenile boyfriend and found her instead (142117). A Man's World 9.50pm BBC2. The role-bound world of courting in the first half of this century remembered, when a man knew a woman was for him when she refused to have sex before marriage (125543).	Reputations 9pm BBC2. (above) Joy Adamson, safari conservationist and author of <i>Born Free</i> , remembered more for her nickname the "Venus" than for raising Elsa the lioness. Third husband George claimed it was separate beds all the way (7880). Undercover Britain 9pm C4. A roller blows the lid off the RAF Widespread Pet image of British construction workers in Germany. Far from being a jaff with the lads, it's often dangerous, illegal and corrupt (19571).	The Ruth Rendell Mysteries 9pm ITV. (above) A new one - with cuddly Keith Barron as the copper on the trail of a (yawn) serial killer (5755). Film: <i>The Sting</i> (George Roy Hill 1973 US). 11.05pm BBC1. Newman and Redford reunited for a betting scam and some fiery Scott Joplin fingerwork (2935059). Bliss (Ray Lawrence 1985 Aus) 12.35am BBC2. Peter Carey's novel about an ad exec, who changes his ways after a close call with death. Barry Otto stars (557504).
<b>Radio</b> The Monday Play: <i>The Kind of Silence</i> 7.45pm R4. Tom Courtenay plays an insanely disciplinarian and abusive father, in a disquieting drama by Shelagh Stephenson, based on true events. Also stars Sue Johnston, Julia Ford and Lesley Sharp.	Night Waves 10.45pm R3. Tony Palmer explores the myth of Dr Livingstone and other heroes of Empire, while Christopher Hope talks about his new novel, <i>Darkest England</i> , in which an African encounters the primitive peoples of modern Britain.	Great Spy, Lenny Tapscott 8.20pm R3. The inspiring true story of Herbie Tapscott, heroic German bomber and broadcaster of the Second World War, who taped out vital information to the Allies during morale-crushing jazz broadcasts.	Soundtrack 7.20pm R4. Bucks in the USSR. Forget the tiger economies: the smart money is following the bear. Imogen Edwards-Jones observes the ambitious young capitalists now thronging to Moscow with the common aim of getting rich quick.	Letter from America 9.15pm R4. It's now been going without a break for 50 years. Alison Cooke marks the anniversary with a new version of its first ever letter, on the subject of GI brides, and some observations on what has changed over half a century.

## Sunday television and radio

## BBC1

- 7.30 *Jim Henson's Animal Show* (S) (4228369).  
 7.55 *Playdays* (R) (S) (1772475).  
 8.15 *This Multimedia Business* (6941678).  
 8.30 *Breakfast with Frost* (671231).  
 9.30 *Season of Change* (9032494).  
 10.15 *See Hear* (S) (492456).  
 10.45 *The French Experience* (3317185).  
 11.00 *Hidden Empire* (R) (S) (1185).  
 11.30 *My Brilliant Career*. John Spleen, campaigning Chairman of Brighton NHS Trust (R) (S) (2814).  
 12.00 *Countryfile* (S) (92475).  
 12.30 *On the Beach* (56271).  
 1.30 *EastEnders Omnibus* (S) (5173663).  
 2.55 *True Grit* (Henry Hathaway 1969 US). John Wayne finally won his Oscar by sending himself up in this surprisingly violent western in which his drink-hardened one-eyed US marshal is persuaded by a 14-year-old girl to track down her father's killers. With Glen Campbell, Kim Darby (as the girl) and Robert Duvall (17370036).  
 5.00 *The Pink Panther Show* (1648630).  
 5.20 *The Clothes Show* (S) (1285456).  
 5.45 *News, Weather* (510185).  
 6.05 *Local News* (299253).  
 6.10 *Songs of Praise* (S) (569340).  
 6.45 *Antiques Roadshow*. Henley-on-Thames throws up a Venetian old master (S) (817659).  
 7.30 *Ballykissangel*. Last part of the English priest-in-Ireland comedy drama (S) (138814).  
 8.20 *Scent of a Woman* (Martin Brest 1992 US). BBC1's second Oscar-winning performance of the day belongs to Al Pacino as the blind army colonel planning one last spree before ending it all. Chris O'Donnell is the shy college boy assigned to look after him for the weekend. Both lives - needless to say - are changed forever (Concluded after the News) (4836659).  
 9.45 *News, Weather* (57291).  
 10.00 *Scent of a Woman* (S) (2307).  
 11.00 *Heart of the Matter*. Divorce, British-style. Joan Bakewell investigates (S) (957307).  
 11.40 *The Duellists* (Ridley Scott 1977 UK). Scott's first film is a stunningly photographed, coolly impassioned adaptation of Joseph Conrad's Napoleonic-era story *The Duel*, and stars Keith Carradine and Harvey Keitel as two French Napoleonic fighting out their own private war, through a series of duels, against the backdrop of the wider conflict (913746).  
 1.20 *Weather* (654963). To 1.25am.  
 REGIONS. Wales. 11.00pm Wales Playhouse. 11.30 *Heart of the Matter*. 12.10 *The Duellists*. 1.50 *News*. Nt. 2.55pm *You're Talking 3.20* Up to the Port 3.50 *Wings of the Apache* 5.10 *Our Roving Reporter*.

## BBC2

- 6.15 *Open University: Pure Maths: Multiplying Matrices* (9690659). 6.40 *Maths Models* (6893185). 7.05 *Developing World* (5626543).  
 7.55 *Christopher Plumber*. Biopic of the playwright (1761369). 8.20 *Animal Behaviour* (4556727). 8.45 *Making Readers for Life* (6014746).  
 9.10 *Children's BBC: Jackanory* (1773388). 9.25 *Phantom 2040* (6847104). 9.45 *The All New Popeye Show* (5214611). 10.05 *I'll Never Work Design Awards* (4514562). 10.30 *Grange Hill* (9018240). 10.55 *The Art and Dec Show* (9960730). 11.20 *Short Change* (6099185).  
 11.45 *Star Trek* (S) (592901).  
 1.00 *Singled Out* (82203185).  
 1.20 *Holiday Outings* (54160630).  
 1.30 *Regional Programmes* (27659).  
 2.00 *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Stanley Kramer 1961 US). "An all-star concentration-camp drama, with special guest-victim appearances", was how Gavin Lambert wickedly summed up Kramer's drama about the trial of the Nazi judges who enforced Hitler's laws. Spencer Tracy presides over Bert Lancaster, Richard Widmark, Marlene Dietrich and Judy Garland (72937475).  
 4.55 *Rugby Special* (S) (9577123).  
 5.55 *The Natural World: The Colourful Bowerbird* in action (S) (232659).  
 6.45 *Crafts 96 - Best in Show*. The announcement of Best in Show, and the Working, Terrier and Hound groups. Cuff viewing (S) (232678).  
 8.00 *Clive Anderson Is Our Man In...*. Beirut. See Preview, p.2 (S) (28814).  
 8.40 *The Money Programme*. The concern in universities that pure scientific research has been sacrificed for the needs of industry (629562).  
 9.20 *Horizon*. 1/2. See Preview, p.2 (S) (120562).  
 10.10 *Cricknet World Cup*. Highlights from the Australia-Sri Lanka final in Lahore (518104).  
 11.10 *Cat Chaser* (Abel Ferrara 1989 US). Witty, understated Elmore Leonard adaptation, co-scripted by Leonard, stars Peter Weller as a Miami-based ex-marine who asks for trouble by dating the wife of the head of the secret police in the Dominican Republic. Kelly McGillis (Followed by *Weather*) (S) (706017).  
 12.40 *Act of Violence* (Fred Zinnemann 1949 US). Film noir about crippled POW camp survivor Van Heltin hunting down the ex-enemy who betrayed him and his comrades during a prison break-out (8182895). To 2.00am.  
 REGIONS. Wales. 3.30pm *Welsh Lobby*. 4.55 *Scrum* 5. Nt. 1.30pm *Country Times*.

## ITV/London

- 6.00 *GMTV*. 6.00 *The Sunday Review*. 6.30 *News at 6*.  
 8.00 *Disney Club*. Let Loose in rehearsal. See Preview, p.2.  
 10.15 *Like You* (S) (567123).  
 10.30 *A Meditation*. In the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi (195253).  
 11.30 *Blessed Are They* (S) (253061).  
 11.55 *Chalk Talk*. With TV vicar Rev. Steve Chalk (S) (774017).  
 12.30 *Crosswalk* (15814).  
 1.00 *News, Weather* (48567630).  
 1.10 *Jonathan Dimbleby*. Foreign Secretary, *Maitland*.  
 2.00 *Big Back - the Glory Years*. Another episode for football. Ireland's World Cup match with Italy remembered (R) (6036).  
 2.30 *The Sunday Match*. Birmingham City vs Sunderland - and Endsleigh League goals of importance to the Carlton area (53551369).  
 5.10 *Murder, She Wrote*. Jessica visits Ireland. There goes the peace process (S) (546027).  
 6.05 *London Tonight* (762524).  
 6.20 *News, Weather* (762524).  
 6.35 *You've Been Framed!* (S) (574456).  
 7.05 *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace* (Storyline) (S) (1987 US). Christopher Reeve as the same race in this lastly-rivalling third sequel must somehow (money?) tempt Gene Hackman and Margot Kidder back down Metropolis way (S) (4891827).  
 8.45 *News, Weather* (446949).  
 9.00 *Band of Gold*. Carol is arrested on suspicion of murder (S) (4388).  
 10.00 *Cracker*. 1/3. The beginning of another re-run story. "The Big Crunch" finds Fitz investigating the disappearance of a teenage girl (R) (S) (7475).  
 11.00 *The Field* (Jim Sheridan 1990 UK). Sheridan's follow-up to *My Left Foot* was almost bound to disappoint. Richard Harris gives one of his force-of-nature turns as Irishman "Bull" McCabe, a shaggy old dog who has toiled for years to turn a rock-strewn wasteland into the most fertile patch around. Enter Tom Berenger, the Yank who wants to buy it. With John Hurt, Sean Bean, and Brenda Fricker (5942872).  
 1.05 *Cue the Music*. The Commitments (4763944).  
 2.10 *The Accidental Tourist* (Lawrence Kasdan 1988 US). Emotionally repressed travel writer John Hurt finds will to live again thanks to cocky dog trainer Geena Davis (4730437).  
 4.25 *Night Shift* (1464638).  
 4.35 *Shift* (6436692). To 5.30am.

## Channel 4

- 6.25 *Trans World Sport* (R) (7258901).  
 7.20 *Take 5*. With *The Magic Roundabout*, *Bush Tails*, *Natalie*, *Not the Engine* and *Joggy Bear* (S) (5532104).  
 7.45 *The Magic School Bus* (S) (6933).  
 8.15 *Hong Kong Phooey* (692438).  
 8.30 *Stunt Dogs* (601659).  
 8.55 *Biker Mice from Mars* (R) (6023494).  
 9.20 *The Secret World of Alex Mack* (S) (2247165).  
 9.50 *Earthworm Jim* (S) (522072).  
 10.15 *Saved by the Bell: The New Class* (1527185).  
 10.40 *Wipe Up* (S) (482369).  
 11.15 *NBA Raw*. The Phoenix Suns take on the Detroit Pistons (467820).  
 12.15 *Mission Impossible* (721630).  
 1.15 *Board Stupid*. Gabrielle and Mica Paris join the snowboarders (S) (767272).  
 1.45 *The Tall Men*. (1955) Western with Clark Gable. (7672982).  
 4.00 *Blue Wilderness*. Underwater film-makers Ron and Valerie Taylor and a lot of sharks (920).  
 4.30 *A French Affair*. Beginning a re-run of this two-part study from Malcolm Bankworth and team, who brought us the recent *Island of Dreams* of British people who have moved to France hoping to turn their Dordogne holiday into a way of life (R) (S) (51562).  
 5.30 *Hollyoaks*. Lucy's (R) (S) (4561).  
 6.00 *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey* (Peter Hewitt 1991 US). Before Wayne's World there was Bill and Ted, grungy American teenage dudes with their own vocabulary for a year or so there, "bodacious" was the ultimate accolade. Keanu Reeves and Alex Winter are kidnapped by Joss Ackland's evil-doer, and replaced by replicas. Good fun (S) (82085369).  
 7.45 *Traveling Ticks*. Pete McCarthy in the Australian Outback (S) (661901).  
 8.00 *Encounters: Twitchers*. See Preview, p.2 (5494).  
 9.00 *Bad Behaviour* (Les Blair 1992 UK). See *The Big Picture*, p.2 (S) (5253).  
 11.00 *December Bride* (Thaddeus O'Sullivan 1988 UK). The landscape of coastal Northern Ireland is beautifully captured in O'Sullivan's sombre piece that sees Saskia Reeves's turn-of-the-century maid having an affair with the two brothers who employ her (324675).  
 12.35 *Your Face*. Animation (R) (7477215).  
 12.40 *La Vie En Un Long Fleuve Tranquille* (Eliane Chazotte 1988 Fr). Satire on the provincial French class system has a middle-class couple discovering that a vengeful nurse exchanged their new-born son with the daughter of an impoverished, near-criminal family 12 years previously (183437). To 2.15am.

## ITV/Regions

- WGL**  
 As London excepts. 2.00am *Countryfile* (S) (92475). 2.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 3.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 3.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 4.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 4.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 5.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 5.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 6.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 6.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 7.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 7.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 8.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 8.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 9.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 9.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 10.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 10.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 11.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 11.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 12.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 12.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 1.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 1.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 2.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 2.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 3.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 3.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 4.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 4.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 5.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 5.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 6.00 *Weather* (S) (1772475). 6.30 *News* (S) (1772475). 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## Mugabe goes it alone as last rival quits presidential poll

ROBERTS

By remaining challenger Robert Mugabe has pulled this weekend's presidential elections in Zimbabwe. The outcome of the election is in doubt. Earlier this week, the ally of Mr Mugabe, the Internal Settlement, had asked the court to reject an appeal by the opposition.

Mr Mugabe's party, the Zanu-PF, has been campaigning furiously since he was tipped off that as many as 85 per cent of the eligible 5 million voters might simply find they have better things to do than turn up to cast a meaningless ballot. Margaret Dongo, one of only three opposition MPs in the 150-member parliament, had urged people to stay at home.

Mr Mugabe threw himself, his party and the media into top gear, and according to some reports looked like achieving a barely respectable 40 per cent turnout.

Now Bishop Muzorewa may have succeeded in throwing election weekend into chaos, thereby achieving the only kind of victory that was available to a party playing uphill on a steeply sloping playing field.

Officials had said on Thursday that the election would be cancelled if the bishop did not run, but in a quick turnaround yesterday the registrar general, Tobaiwa Mudede, said that the elections would go ahead as Bishop Muzorewa and Mr Sithole had failed to submit their withdrawals in time.

Yesterday, Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay called the opposition coalition's argument "entirely without merit". A Supreme Court hearing on the constitutional issues raised by

the United Parties is scheduled for 24 June, but it is difficult to see what purpose would be served by such a hearing, with Mr Mugabe firmly entrenched by then for another six years.

Bishop Muzorewa resumed his political career in 1994, eight years after retiring from the presidency of his opposition United African National Council. "I am back because the people want me to help them get rid of the current dictatorship," he said at the time. He describes himself as an optimist and God-sent politician. And perhaps his prayers have been answered.

At a recent rally, Mr Mugabe told his audience: "I know we will win but European countries want to see how many people will vote... If, for instance, they see that half the number of people registered to vote, say, in Bulawayo did vote, they will say Mugabe's party is not popular."

The president has always been sensitive about his international image, and the turn of events has done nothing to enhance it.

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Power of one: President Robert Mugabe addressing Zanu-PF supporters at an election rally

Photograph: Reuters

## Mandela aims to heal rifts left by bloody past

ROBERT BLOCK  
Johannesburg

President Nelson Mandela and his African National Congress embarked this week on some risky gambits to help heal South Africa's bloody past and to stem the continuing political violence in the Zulu heartland.

Perhaps the boldest of these moves was the announcement yesterday that the Justice Minister, Dullah Omar, plans to withdraw the immunity from prosecution granted to 73 ANC members by the last white minority government. Among those affected are some senior government officials, including the Deputy President and his apparent to Mr Mandela, Thabo Mbeki. Defence Minister Joe Modise, and his deputy, Ronnie Kasrils.

The announcement apparently followed a request to Mr Omar by the ANC and also comes hot on the heels of an ANC statement urging members with skeletons in their closet to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to confess their sins and seek amnesty.

The indemnities were originally designed to allow exiled anti-apartheid activists wanted for political and other crimes by the old white regime to come back for peace talks and the 1994 all-race elections. More recently, they have earned the contempt of conservative whites, particularly since the indictment last year of the former defence minister, General Magnus Malan, for 13 apartheid-era murders.

Critics said it was wrong to prosecute members of former white governments for crimes committed under apartheid while ANC members were protected from legal action for any excesses they committed during the struggle against the hated system. FW de Klerk, the last president of the "old" South Africa and now a Deputy President in the Government of National Unity, accused the ANC of hiding behind the indemnities and has repeatedly called on Mr Mandela to level the pitch by stopping the case against Gen Malan or by withdrawing immunity from ANC members.

ANC officials, however, yesterday denied that their decision was motivated by outside criticism. "We believe we are doing the right thing," Ronnie Mamoepa, the ANC national spokesman, said. "We believe in the correctness of our decision and that only in this way can we bury the past by exposing it. Now the decision may also have the added benefit of pulling the carpet out from underneath our detractors, but that is just a spin-off."

In the statement urging ANC members to go to the Truth Commission, the party said: "The ANC will never condone any human rights violations which may have been committed by freedom fighters during the heat of struggle."

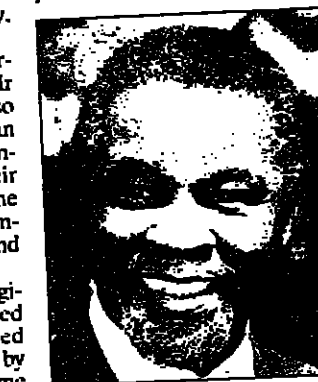
But at the same time there is a consensus within the party that the organisation was fighting a just struggle against an immoral system, and as a whole, does not have to account for the kind of human rights abuse

committed by those who created and defended apartheid.

Many in the ANC oppose both the withdrawal of the indemnities and pushing members to go to the Truth commission. Many feel that the move is misguided and feel that they have nothing to account for.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, charged with investigating politically motivated crimes under white-minority rule, plans to hold its long-awaited first hearings towards the middle of next month.

As important as the indemnity move but riskier, was President Mandela's meeting yesterday with his political rival, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and hundreds of Zulu chiefs at a palace of the Zulu King, Good-



Thabo Mbeki: Loses immunity from prosecution

will Zwelithini, in Nongoma. The meeting was supposed to pave the way for an *imbizo*, a traditional gathering in which the entire Zulu nation is invited to attend, in this case for the purpose of ending factional fighting in KwaZulu-Natal between the ANC and Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party.

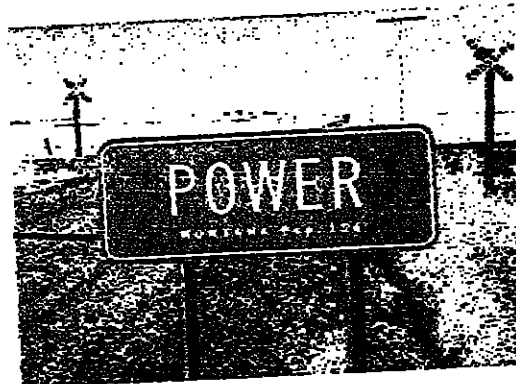
Most of the chiefs are strong supporters of Chief Buthelezi and his quest for provincial autonomy and few Mr Mandela with guarded suspicion. Thus it was no surprise that there were jeers when Mr Mandela told the crowd that he would use his presidential powers to end the violence plaguing the province and to stop "animals from killing innocent men, women and children".

More than 13,000 people have been killed in a decade of factional fighting for control of the province. The ANC has long held that right-wing former security officials and paramilitaries aligned with Inkatha extremists have been sowing the violence and Mr Mandela yesterday accused "dark and sinister forces" of inciting violence.

There were fears that extremists might use the opportunity to attack either the President or his ally, King Goodwill, who publicly broke with his uncle, Chief Buthelezi, and Inkatha, last year. Thousands of police and soldiers were dispatched to Nongoma just in case.

The meeting was uneventful. Not only was it peaceful, but it broke up late yesterday after failing to make any concrete moves towards setting an *imbizo*. Even so, many people left saying the meeting just might prove to be the kick-start needed to get the peace process in KwaZulu-Natal rolling.

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Were this week's revelations about Will sleeping with Di designed to do anything other than promote Britain's newest media babe? Liz Hunt reports

# The making of Julia

Hard-headed media-babe Julia Carling, or wronged wife struggling valiantly to build a new life alone? The jury is still out, but for Julia Carling, estranged wife of Will and a fledgling television star, this may have been the week in which she was made or broken in the public's affections.

This morning as Julia sits behind curtains drawn against the paparazzi at home in Putney, south-west London, she will be reflecting on the revelations of her "friend" who confirmed to the *Daily Mirror* Will's adulterous affair with the Princess of Wales and set off a tabloid feeding frenzy superseded only by the Dunblane massacre.

That friend described in detail how Julia confronted Will over phone bills charging calls to Kensington Palace and Diana's private line – "six times in an hour" on one day – and how he confessed the affair to his distraught wife.

Her pre-marriage doubts, her devastation when she found out the truth, and her new life alone with her dog, Biff, "her best friend now", were designed to make heart-rending reading. But the overall effect smacked first of revenge, and then of ambition.

Later today at Twickenham, just down the road from the smart, terraced house the couple once shared – now at the heart of an increasingly bitter divorce row – Will Carling will lead out the England team for his last match as captain. His place in history is assured: the most successful England rugby captain of all time and alleged lover of the wife of the heir to the throne.

However, Julia's play for posterity hangs in the balance. This might be her 15 minutes of fame, a bit player in the constitutional crisis triggered by the Waleses' marriage breakdown. Or it could be the start of a media career for a talented woman who has done nothing more than seize the opportunities that came to her unbidden in the form of a royal scandal.

If Julia Carling ever saw herself as a rival queen of hearts to that other bottle-blond, then last week she blew it. She emerged in the eyes of many as manipulative, vengeful and grasping. If, however, the aim was to maximise the column inches and focus attention on an obscure award for her work on a VH-1 satellite music station to boost a blossoming terrestrial television career, then it was a resounding triumph.

And there was the satisfaction of wounding Will, her husband of less than two years, who cheated on her. And on top of that was the pleasure of embarrassing Diana, the other

woman who, through her own "friends", has accused Julia of using tabloid thistle-tattle to extract herself from a hasty marriage that had proved less than satisfactory. Mrs Carling also raised the stakes in the impending divorce battle; it is claimed that she wants the marital home and freedom from the outstanding £140,000 mortgage on it.

But of course the world excludes that decorated the tabloid front pages this week actually had nothing to do with Julia. Despite her husband's angry accusation through solicitors on Thursday that she was the source of the stories.

Tabloid therapy is the refuge of many celebrities. But Julia has been described as 'just a pawn in the War of the Waleses'.

"Nobody had the guts to publish it until Piers Morgan at the *Daily Mirror* took a chance. It is so unfair to say that she had anything to do with it. She absolutely did not. She is just a pawn in the War of the Waleses."

It has been suggested – and flatly denied – that Charles's camp planted the story to embarrass Diana during her divorce battle. "I don't know," the friend said. "But both of the Waleses are looking for any ammunition at all to fire at each other."

All nonsense, according to another source, a "friend" of none of the protagonists in this shoddy drama, but a seasoned tabloid watcher. "The only person to benefit from the stories this week was Julia Carling. The timing was perfect. The aim was to embarrass Will in an important week and grab the limelight just before the award."

Julia Carling does not fit easily into media categories. She is more up-market and street-wise than the "weather girls" like Tania Bryer and Ulrika Jonsson, less sexually threatening than Mariella Frostrup but smarter than Gaby Roslin. She is a prettier, neater, more petite and less irritating version of Anthea Turner. And perched, smiling broadly with tousled locks, atop a Grecian column on the cover of the April issue of *Tatler*, that is who she most closely resembles.

Anthea has a Svengali figure in husband and agent Peter Powell. Julia is different. True, there is an older brother, Adrian Smith or "Miv", as she calls him, a former banker who handles her publicity and is a powerful presence at any interview, constantly looked to for reassurance or approval.

But essentially the rise and rise of Julia, former record shop assistant, to pop PR woman with clients such as Tina Turner, and Right Said Fred, and now on to small-screen stardom, is down to one person: herself.

No doubt she has benefited from the advice and contacts of older, celebrity boyfriends such as rock musicians Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton. And a troubled marriage to a national sporting hero has helped a lot. But all the signs are that Julia knew what she wanted and she went for it. She will probably get it and probably deserves it.

For Julia is nothing if not a

young woman who fell for the charms of a cad – James Hewitt a single man – was acceptable. Diana as alleged sexually-driven marriage breaker was not. And Julia had stood by her man. She was seen standing close to him, fingers entwined, at every photo-opportunity, from the day in August 1995 when the *News of the World* broke the story of "Di's secret trysts with Will."

Initially the Carlings declared undying devotion and Julia showed her feisty underdog side. "Diana picked the wrong couple to do it with this time because we can only get stronger from it," she told newspapers. We lapped it up and rooted for her as time and again Will inflicted pain upon her.

In September Di and Will were pictured again leaving a sports clinic. On 28 September Will and Julia announced they had agreed to spend some time apart. In a carefully composed statement Julia spoke movingly of losing her husband "in a manner which has become outside her control".

At that stage the Will/Diana affair was still pure speculation. Every woman who has ever been cheated on applauded Julia Carling. Her increasingly frequent appearances in newspapers and television were regarded as a brave attempt to regain her self-confidence rather than someone capitalising on a crisis.

If she had left it there, according to Max Clifford, PR supremo and the man behind the first story in the *NoW*, she would have had it all: public sympathy and a promising career.

But she could not resist pushing it too far, he says. "Will has had some good publicity recently, and I think she is a bad loser. You are not going to get too much sympathy from your average reader talking about financial insecurity, with a £70,000 television contract short-term or not."

He suspects there was an irresistible challenge, too: Julia believed she could take on the Princess of Wales and win the battle for hearts and minds. "That was a miscalculation. She thought she could beat the most famous woman in the world – an arch manipulator of the press – but still one of the most popular, at her own game. She couldn't."

Perhaps not, but if Clifford's interpretation is correct, there is a personal ambition driving Julia Carling that will not go away. And that means in all likelihood she will not either.



## Jo Brand's week

If you haven't planned your holidays yet, I would suggest maybe you try and avoid somewhere where there are British squaddies, as they don't seem to be able to behave themselves when soaked in the amber nectar. A recent brawl at a bar in Cyprus resulted in a British soldier being shot. (One less brawler to deal with, I suppose). The owner of the bar in which the brawl took place, ironically, is English, but quite rightly disowned her fellow citizens in a statement in which she said she felt ashamed. Brawls in Cyprus between local youths and squaddies are frequent. Maybe they've got too much energy, maybe they're bored or maybe the sort of bloke the army attracts is just a troublesome moron. Whichever it is, very few efforts seem to have been made to sort it out. Perhaps the officers just see it as an occupational hazard of training our boys (and children many of them are) to keep the peace, only to find they're the ones disturbing it. The only positive and rather unhelpful thing I can say about it is at least they are not over here.

A sample question in the GNVQ science exam asks examinees to identify a bird "obtaining nutrients" and offers four pictures – a bird holding a twig, eating a worm, preening itself and relieving itself. This exam is for 16-year-olds. This very difficult question only applies to potential rocket scientists, obviously. Even the tabloids with a reading age of nine aren't going to last long by the looks of it.

One always imagines Scandinavia as a bastion of liberal values, with tasteful puns, prisons like palaces, healthy Aryan youth, crèches for all and extreme cleanliness. So it was bit of a shock to discover that between all the saunas, smorgasbords and snow, true Californians. A war between Hells Angels and Bandidos looks set to claim more victims as it gets out of hand. Not only are they shooting at each other, but they are also leaving bombs under cars, which seems more in keeping with their pillaging ancestors, who all looked like Kirk Douglas and wouldn't flinch if an eagle pecked their eyes out. Then you discover that these bike boys are taking their orders from parent organisations in America, where these gangs are geographically too far apart to bother rucking with each other. But in little old Europe, of course, they don't have to make too much effort to come together. What a horrible



Europe beset by hands of blivers

thought – bike boys come to Europe. Shampoo sales look set to plummet.

I wouldn't hold out too much hope for the Russian soldiers who got drunk and sold a tank and an armoured combat vehicle to Chechen rebels. In times of strife, I suppose it is reassuring to know that there can be a dialogue between sworn enemies. After all, in the First World War, soldiers from both sides stopped fighting and had a game of football outside the trenches. In this day and age, it seems they are prepared to be friendly – if they're making something out of it. Three cheers for capitalism.

It was reassuring to hear John Major's reasoned argument against



the European Union's attempt to set a 48-hour limit to the working week. It's stupid, apparently.

Of course it's stupid, if you put competition above everything else. Then again, so are attempts to protect employees' health, safety and rights at work. British employees work the longest hours in Europe, with nearly a third of men working full time doing more than 48 hours a week. No wonder everyone I speak to is always knackered. Maybe we're all stupid to have put up with it for so long.

A holiday boss in Amsterdam has set up a business sending postcards from exotic locations so people can



Wish you were here (honest)

impress their friends. I find it difficult to believe people are that shallow. If you have friends who would be impressed because you've had a flash holiday, I'd change your friends. Then there is the small problem of having to discuss the non-existent holiday with your friends when you "get back". No doubt this bloke will provide fact-sheets, so you can breeze through conversation about your "holiday" with ease. No worries about the actual contents of the postcard, I suppose. The likelihood of anyone British writing anything interesting on a postcard is zilch.

The Queen has been accused of making a racist remark about the premier of Papua New Guinea by the writer Paul Theroux, who in return is accused of breaking royal protocol to report it. I'm glad he did. The fact that the Queen is using childish colonial words like "fuzzy wuzzy" is an eye-opener. She must have picked up the habit from Prince Philip.

I see a woman was fined £400 this week for lighting up on a non-smoking flight. Kind of takes away the savings you make at duty free, doesn't it? As a smoker, I would not encourage people to break the law, but I have a few suggestions for airlines that have banned smoking out of the blue on long-haul flights. First of all, you could stop selling cigarettes if we cannot use them. Secondly, you could let people know in advance that the flight is non-smoking instead of breaking the cheery news as they check in.

Thirdly, you can expect a bit of a mass (albeit wheezing) exodus on to Japan Airlines, who still have sympathy for us. I'm off to Australia in April and they're about the only buggers who will still let you have a smoot. Sayonara.

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# Understanding how we failed to make them safe

You must have a jumble of feelings at the end of this most awful week. We go round and round, over and over, picking it up and putting it down again. We are drawn to it, need to know the dreadful reality of it: what happened in that gym that morning. And yet we are repelled by it, our interest an intrusion upon a sorrow so profound that it can only be private.

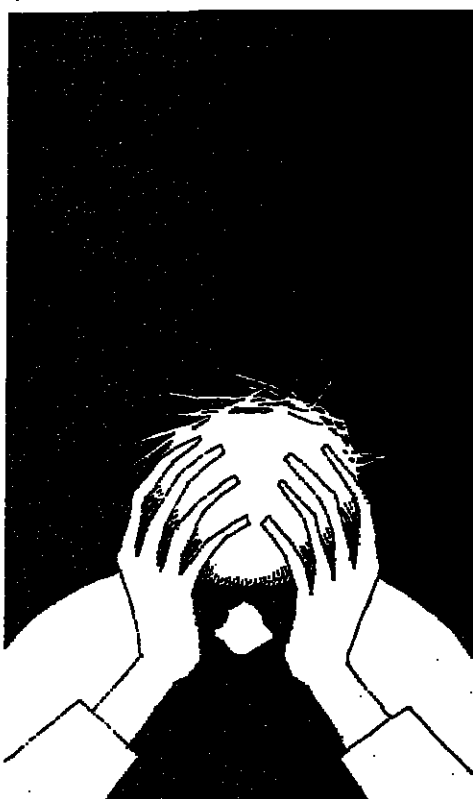
We want to know, don't we, how we let them down, those tiny children. Yet we know, we tell ourselves, "We didn't do it, he did." We feel that a terrible judgement upon us, our society, is inescapable when one of our members - for that is what Hamilton was - could commit such a crime. We must be a godless world, a pitiless place that such an arbitrary and cruel act could be possible. It was surely a reflection of a society that itself is deranged, unhinged, twisted. And yet we know, we tell ourselves, "We didn't do it, he did." He was an oddity, an aberration, someone so chaotic and evil that there could be no accounting for him and against which all planning is useless.

So we go back, and round, and back again. It is difficult to know even where to begin to explain it all, to understand. Yet attempt to understand we must, to make sure we do not smother the terror beneath a river of words, or comfort ourselves with hasty actions or anaesthetise ourselves with hollow rituals. We must try to understand it, knowing that we will never be able to fully explain it. But we must try, because without that effort of understanding we might as well accept defeat in the face of the flood of random risks and uncertainties of modern life. That is too bleak a prospect.

Start with that picture of Class P1 and their proud teacher, Gwenne Mayor, taken at the start of the school year. Hopeful, excited, curious, shy, bright, sweet, those children were above all trusting. They were trusting of their teacher and their parents, the adults around them and the world into which they had been brought.

And because they were so trusting, it is difficult for any adult to see that picture and not feel dismay, shame even, that we did not do better for them, that we did not make them safe. Of course we did not create Hamilton. As far as we know he never did anything so grave that any one person might have taken action to prevent Wednesday's killings. Like those other killers who seem to have passed beyond the boundaries of morality - Yigal Amir, Fred West and Timothy McVeigh - Thomas Hamilton's motives and values seem warped and distorted beyond recognition.

And yet the events at Dunblane come from somewhere. Hamilton emerged from the backdrop against which he acted. Hamilton's story, like the story of so much violence in our society, is a tale of men and weapons, sex and repression, power and revenge. The culture that encircled that school is one of incessant violence. Violence in the name of art, entertainment and news washes over us. Read it in Irvine Welsh, watch it in the film *Seven*, hear about it on television true-life crime programmes, play it out on video consoles, feel the thrill of becoming an assassin in arcades up and down the land. It's not just out there in culture; it's in families and homes, and almost certainly was in Hamilton's own contorted



home. The connection cannot be simple or singular. The thread of violence that runs through society starts and ends in many places. But which of us would be so confident that we could deny that Thomas Hamilton was at some point woven into it inextricably?

We live in a disconnected culture. He was a loner, they say, as if this is an odd thing in our age. In our atomised society, intimacy is shunned and strangers are everywhere. We enjoy a culture that prizes independence and choice; yet that also produces some of its most troubling problems. Lone parents are the controversial objects of social policy. Single young men are the feared perpetrators of much violence. Loners like Hamilton are where benign singleness festers and turns poisonous, where being alone creates the space in which paranoia flourishes to burst out in violence.

The backdrop from which Thomas Hamilton emerged is complex. Tracing the connections between it and his actions last Wednesday is not simple. But there are connections and there will be lessons that we should ponder to make our society stronger, better able to take responsibility for itself.

That understanding would be easier if the lesson were simple, delivered clearly. But we now have no institutions, no moral leaders, who are unquestionably able to play that role for us.

The church has played a credible part. It does at times of national mourning. But its moral leadership does not extend beyond the immediate provision of spiritual solace. The professionals - psychiatrists, social workers, psycholo-

gists, geneticists - peddle their particular explanations, but none of them match the scale of what has happened.

Politicians have done better than we might have feared. The silence and respect in the House of Commons, the dignity of Forsyth and Robertson, Major and Blair acting together, have spoken well of politics. We will look to politics for practicalities: the tougher policies we obviously need to control powerful handguns. But none of us seriously thinks that politicians will help to unpick the meaning of what has happened.

So where do we turn? To ourselves and our own civic culture. For that is what Dunblane stands for: decency, ordered, calm, civil, still a community in a society that has so few. That is what the school itself stands for: a place of refuge and togetherness, solidarity and hope, the cradle of civic virtue in a fragmenting society. Through this week, the teachers of that school, led by its headmaster, have provided the most profound examples of civic heroism, laying down their lives for the sake of their charges. And so too in remembering the tiny victims of Dunblane, we should engage in our own quiet and civic acts of remembrance this weekend by observing a quiet on Sunday. Beyond that, through memorials, planting trees, providing benches, through small and large acts, we can remember the dead.

The events in Dunblane did not come from nowhere. They emerged from a backdrop. If we look hard enough, we will all find ourselves upon that backdrop. That must be the starting point for our understanding, and also the most fitting place to make our remembrance.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Dunblane massacre: glorification of violence is not confined to gun lovers

Sir: On 13 March, ITV's evening film was changed from *Licence to Kill* to *A Field of Dreams*. This was totally laudable given the violence committed in Dunblane earlier in the day.

However, as a society we try to have our cake and eat it. We "enjoy" the glorification of violence on the screen. It is cool for the debonair Bond to clear his path of obstructing human beings. The reality as witnessed in that school's gymnasium is different. Are we pacifists who are truly striving for peace and justice? If so, we must demythologise violence and encourage every effort to provide peace.

Legislation is only part of the answer. Ultimately evil has to be confronted deep in the heart of every human being. It is when we recognise that and turn to the divine resources available to overcome evil that as a society we can get beyond a dream that sometimes turns into a nightmare.

The Rt Rev David Evans, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Canterbury, Chichester and Rochester, Uckfield, East Sussex

Sir: It is, perhaps, insensitive to attack our politicians for neglecting to take action which could have prevented the Dunblane tragedy, at a time that they share the general grief.

But over the years, at intervals, members of gun clubs have committed violent crimes with the weapons they have been allowed to retain in their homes, and Parliament has done little. If Japan can have rigorous gun controls, why can't Britain? Let us have the action from Parliament which will speak louder than all the words of compassion, however sincere.

E PAULL  
London SW16



Flowers at the gates of Dunblane Primary School

Photograph: Brian Harris

Sir: Why is any member of the public legally allowed to possess a weapon of the types used at Dunblane?

There are ordinary people, such as farmers with shotguns, who need to use guns in their daily lives, and those, such as soldiers and the police, who use them in the course of duty. I would not want to restrict the sensible use of guns in the course of work or sport. But I cannot see any reason for the possession of semi-automatic pistols being legal in open society.

JOEL BAILLIE-LANE  
St Albans

Sir: There is one inescapable fact. The children and their teacher were killed by guns.

The murderer did not use bows and arrows, stones or knives; he used guns. His carnage was only possible using guns.

All the speculation as to motive, all the psychoanalysis, is a waste of time. There are people at large, and nothing can be done to detect them, who have the seeds of such destruction within them. Leave the means at their disposal and such disasters will occur. Gun control is patently a failure. There are very few legitimate reasons for possessing a gun, and sport is not one of them. Gun crimes of this kind are not carried out by mentally disturbed people who obtained their guns from the underworld. They were obtained

from the vast pool of legal weapons. This pool must be removed.

ROBERT NAIRN  
London SE1

Sir: Tears come at any mention of the massacre at Dunblane and they are as much us as anything to the victims and their parents. But the count of the victims includes Mr Hamilton.

His state of mind must have been beyond the bounds of loss and sorrow that we can imagine and he too suffered and died. It is repulsive to suggest that his suffering could weigh against the grief caused by his final articulation of it but there is an explanation for the terrible disproportion of what

he did. It is in the tools of butchery that he had to hand.

JON GRAY  
Marsbury, Avon

Sir: How is it that a man with a dubious sexual and mental history is allowed a gun licence? Or, more generally, how is it that there remains no formal system to prevent a person convicted of child sexual abuse in one area moving to another and regaining access to children, whilst the local authorities in the new area remain oblivious of the past history?

What is needed is a national database to which government agencies might refer in a range of situations, whether they be registering childminders, or issuing gun licences. This will pose difficult questions over civil liberties, yet this might be a price worth paying.

OLIVER STRONG  
Brasenose College  
Oxford

Sir: Your front page picture (14 March) of the schoolchildren and their teacher from Dunblane has made me feel physically unwell.

As a mother with children at a local school I cannot imagine how your picture has affected the bereaved parents and other relatives of those killed and injured. I am also a doctor and I know that my colleagues in the vicinity of Dunblane will have problems dealing with the stress that such trauma will have caused in relatives and local people. The actions of the media in such situations in reinforcing the images does nothing to help people recover.

Dr JANE FAIRWEATHER  
Ipswich

Sir: We will never understand what motivates a person to commit an act of such utter horror as witnessed in Dunblane this week. However, I wonder

if media attention contributes. Perpetrators of such unspeakable acts make the headlines and for a brief spell achieve the notoriety that they could not accomplish otherwise.

When such a tragedy happens and the perpetrator commits suicide would it not be better to have limited coverage? Do the media really have to intrude upon the grief of individuals? Does the country need a breakfast television programme based in the town? Do they need to stop passing by, asking pointless questions?

The media try to find reasons for such acts, when there are not rational reasons or certain solutions. The banning of guns to particular individuals would not have stopped the flamethrower attack on the Irish A-level students. Guns are not necessary for atrocities to happen.

The people of Dunblane know that they are in the thoughts and prayers of the civilised people of the world and they need to be allowed to grieve with dignity and privacy.

ELISABETH ROWLAND  
London SE23

Sir: We want to let you know that we in our school in Holland are deeply shocked by what happened in the primary school in Dunblane. Today we sent the school a telegram. The children of our school have in mind to send a letter with drawings to the children of the Dunblane primary school. We will send this letter next week.

A A VLIETSTRA  
Headmaster  
De Zaaier Primary School  
Teuge  
Netherlands

Sir: Forget all the fine words. In a civilised society there is no place for gun ownership by individuals.

S CROWLEY  
Orpington, Kent

## DAVID AARONOVITCH Swamp fever



Seventeen years after General Robert E Lee surrendered the Confederate armies at Appomattox Courthouse and ended the American Civil War, a crocodile factory opened in Louisiana. And this week a London investment bank agreed to pay several million dollars to the US government to have the site of the factory dredged and cleaned.

The story goes like this: in 1882 the Alabama, New Orleans, Texas and Pacific Junction Railway Company was building a bridge over Lake Pontchartrain, north-east of New Orleans. As I have discovered from my own gardening experience, wooden structures (decks, chairs, coffee tables, bridges) if left outdoors get wet and rot, unless they are protected. So the company needed crocodiles and lots of it. They built their factory at a place called Bayou Lafourche and made the stuff themselves. Years passed, world wars were fought, and the railroad was taken over by a bank, which was absorbed into another bank, which in turn was eventually bought by the Fleming American Investment Trust (of Great Britain).

By now the original site of the works was slap-bang in the centre of the town of Slidell (pop 26,718). And Slidellians found their water was contaminated with crocodile residue. Slidell Working Against Major Pollution (Swamp) was set up, and the town soon became number 1,006 on the American list of hazardous waste sites.

Someone, however, had to pay - and, presumably, an enterprising bureaucrat, clearing out a filing cabinet in a damp federal basement one day, uncovered the chain of ownership. Thus did Fleming end up with the bill.

Consider the implications of this case. As it happens, the house I live in was built in the same year as the crocodile factory. Like many neighbouring houses it was constructed without foundations on top of London clay. Now it is having to be underpinned. Who might sue? Well, at the top of the list are the unfortunate descendants of the original builder, probably dispersed between Moonie Ponds,

Palm Springs and Leytonstone. Not much hope here, I feel. It is hard enough to sue a builder for installing a lavatory upside down last month, let alone for an error committed in 1882.

But what about previous owners of the house, who failed to get it underpinned? Ignorance can be no excuse; the Cajun crocodiers of old Louisiana almost certainly had no idea they were bugging up the bayou. Maybe I can get some dosh out of my predecessors.

And why stop there? In an era of genealogists, all spending every spare moment scouring parish and registry records for ancestors, forebears and bloodlines, just about everybody is now traceable: the relatives of the Luftwaffe pilot who flattened the buildings around St Paul's, of the architect who rebuilt them, of the baker whose negligence caused the great fire in Pudding Lane and other vandals.

And what of the future? In the year 3000 Zarg Marshall, grandson to the power of 20 of the former nuclear chief, Lord Marshall, may find himself beamed into the dock of the Intergalactic Court of Environmental Justice and fined a squillion Blairs for depositing all those rods under the Cairngorms. Good, eh?

Alas, as they say on the banks of Lake Pontchartrain, what goes around, comes around. The problem is that you could as easily be sued as sue. For example, any surviving offshoots of the Muskahohams, the tribe that inhabited the area where Slidell now stands, might well take the present-day townspeople (including all those concerned Swamp members) for every dime as compensation for loss of amenities. In Europe or Asia, if your surname happens to be "Khan" or "The Hun", you could be in dead luck.

Which is why, canny nations, such as ours, have always had laws to allow us to slough off our responsibilities. One of the earliest, Magna Carta, specifically states that a baron's widow shall not be liable to pay off his debt to the Jews. So that's the last time I lend a fiver to an impecunious duke.

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

We've done all right over the years and if Radio 1 feels that we should be banned now it's not exactly going to ruin us overnight - Paul McCartney after *The Beatles* new single "Real Love" didn't make the playlist

It is only by reaching for things which fainter hearts think unachievable that we achieve anything - Iain Duncan Smith, *Tory MP*

Vera Lynn - singing for the troops; I'll be cooking for them - Keith Floyd, *TV chef, who is flying to Bosnia aiming to help the morale of British soldiers*

Opting out (of a single European currency) would not be a soft option... if we fail to recognise that then I suspect we would be in for a hard landing - Eddie George, *Governor of the Bank of England*

It is not a partnership of nations. It is a dictatorship - Teresa Gorman, *Conservative MP on the European Union*

A woman has prejudices even before she designs because she herself will have to wear it. Men don't wear the clothes they make, so they can make a dream - Odmar Versolato, *fashion designer*

He was the kind of man you have nightmares about - Laura Bryce, *11, who saw Thomas Hamilton, wearing a black cap and ear muffs, on the rampage at Dunblane Primary School*

### Just a temporary truce for Bosnia

Sir: According to James Pardew, US special representative for Military Stabilisation in the Balkans, his government will give \$100m to help the Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia build an army able to match the Bosnian Serbs (report, 12 March).

In the next breath, he acknowledges the uneasy relationship between Bosnia's Croats and Muslims - the federation has yet to "merge the rival Croat and Muslim armies". Surely, these nominally federated protégés of Washington will be tempted once again to resolve their differences at the expense of the Bosnian Serbs.

The threat of reimposed economic sanctions would probably stop Belgrade from coming to the rescue of its brothers across the Drina. The spoils from a joint military campaign to expel the Bosnian Serb nation would be mainly allocated to a Muslim entity, which would then accept its lot as a satellite of Greater Croatia.

A precedent was set last summer when Zagreb, with America's approval, invaded the Krajina region and cleansed it of its Serb inhabitants.

The Dayton accord is in essence a temporary ceasefire.

YUGO KOVACH  
Twickenham, Middlesex

### Shunting nurses about will not cure NHS ills

Sir: I must take issue with Professor Sir Roy Calne's letter (11 March) in which he suggests changes in nurse training to ameliorate the shortage of nurses in busy intensive care units. What he appears to be suggesting is the training of multi-skilled critical care nurses, who can be moved from one department to another depending on which critical care areas are short of staff.

Given that courses of qualified nurses in critical care specialties such as coronary care, anaesthesia and intensive care already last for six months, one must ask how long a course would have to be if a nurse were

to achieve competence in several critical care areas. Even if a nurse were able to obtain a level of competence in several areas in, for example, 18 months, I would suggest that the current salary of £15,339 for nurses working in these areas is a rather inadequate incentive to undertake what would be a very demanding course.

It is my experience that nurses tend not to like being shunted from pillar to post. Although working in high dependency areas is stressful for nurses I would suggest that the work becomes less demanding as nurses become more familiar with it. There is a

shortage of nurses in almost every speciality and the reason this shortage is more apparent in intensive care units is because of the high nurse-to-patient ratio.

If the Conservative government were more concerned with funding the NHS properly (at least to the level of comparable European economies) and less concerned with bribing voters with income tax cuts many of the problems which afflict the NHS, causing low morale and shortages of staff and resources, would be solved.

NICHOLAS MARTIN, RGN  
Anaesthetic Staff Nurse  
Edgware, Middlesex

### Alarm bells ringing over technology in schools

Sir: The turmoil within schools over accommodating GCSE technology courses needs addressing as a top priority (report, 14 March). Reports that a shortage of qualified technology teachers and equipment is threatening mandatory courses due to be introduced in September should ring alarm bells throughout the nation.

The Engineering Council, together with other major engineering organisations, campaigned successfully for technology to be a key part of the National Curriculum because the UK's economic success is dependent on a strong engineering base. We have had a sad record of teaching technology in Britain over past decades and it

seemed that, at last, we were beginning to get our act together. For the development of future generations of first-class engineers and technicians now to be undermined by this crisis is extremely alarming.

Mike HEATH  
Director General  
Engineering Council  
London WC2

### Seat of trouble

Sir: My thanks to *The Independent* magazine (9 March). Now at last I know the designer to curse when, with breaking back, I am enduring yet another event seated upon one of Robin Day's ghastly polypropylene chairs. They are the antithesis of all that a well-designed chair should be: their only merit their stackability. Mr Day has inflicted misery upon the millions who have to use his chairs. I note that he is pictured seated upon a very different piece of furniture.

SALLY TURFF  
King's Lynn

### Royal blood

Sir: Everyone's ancestry is half maternal. How can the Queen's lineage be "largely German" (Letters, 14 March) when the Queen Mother is of British descent. George II, who died in 1760, was the last of our sovereigns not to be born in this country. No other family domiciled here so long would still be thought of as German.

JENNIFER MILLER  
London SW15

### Tory boundaries of common sense

Sir: Brian Mawhinney is engaging in a game of make-believe in claiming that the Tories would have achieved an overall majority of 41 instead of 21 had the new boundaries been in place at the last election (report, 14 March).

The only serious independent academic study undertaken for the BBC and ITN by Thrasher and Rallings from Plymouth University, indicates the government majority would have been 27. That was a rigorous exercise that included consultation with all political parties including the Conservatives.

Labour does indeed face a momentous challenge to gain the 56 seats necessary to win an overall majority at the general election. It represents the largest number of Labour gains since its 1964 victory.

But to argue that boundary changes have delivered a 20-seat bonus for the Tory majority while Dr Mawhinney's colleagues have been searching around the country on the chicken run for safer seats because of the very same changes defies intelligent analysis.

DAVID L GARDNER  
London SE7

The writer was the Labour Party's boundaries strategy coordinator 1989-95

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

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PROFILE: Frank Bruno

## The clown who craves respect

Bruno is fighting Tyson for Britain, for the Queen, for the money ... but mostly for his pride, says Jim White

The Sun is in no doubt about what Frank Bruno's fight with Mike Tyson in the early hours of tomorrow morning in a Las Vegas mega-hotel is all about.

"Spunk the Yank, Frank," read one of its headlines this week. And this was a typical contribution to the paper's fax line from a group of its readers: "We put the pride in Mother's Pride, put the great back in Great Britain, Frank from British Bakeries, Greenford."

Like the poor, Frank Bruno seems always to have been with us. He appears to have carried the nation's hopes in the most basic and brutal of sporting contests for a lifetime, yet he is only 34. For this scrap, against the man who embodies the dangers of the profession, the patriotic diads have been turned up to 11.

The Sun, favoured reading matter among the 3,000 Frank fans at present filling Vegas with their chants ("Broooooo, Broooooo"), has orchestrated the campaign. It characterises the fight as the collision between a righteous, decent, home-loving Christian Brit and a dodgy, dangerous, convicted-rapist, Muslim American, a simple meet-

commercial edge to its frenzy, the Sun would probably be right behind Frank anyway. After all, it always has been. Such a wholehearted embrace of a black sportsman as a national hero is unique. Ian Wright, Linford Christie, Colin Jackson, Paul Ince, Daley Thompson, Lennox Lewis, Naseem Hamed, Chris Eubank: there has been something equivocal about the way those black performers have been lauded. Yet unwavering patriotic support has always been there for Bruno. I remember his first attempt on the world title at Wembley in 1986, when the big American Tim Witherspoon put out his fight in the 11th round. Sitting behind me was a wobbly-jawed London racist who spent the entire fight yelling: "Gooo on, Frank, smack the black bastard."

The suspicion is that Bruno has been thus accepted because of the image that has developed around him: big, cuddly, slow, gentle Frank. None of the disconcerting potency of Linford Christie, just a warm, unthreatening presence, a booming voice always willing to be party to some weary rehearsed gag. Encouraged by his canny wife



Frank Bruno: he has not been his usual co-operative self in the pre-match publicity Robert Hallam

national figure, so it became easier for his boxing advisers to sustain his career.

The disappointing truth about Bruno is that, despite his Greek-god physique and massive punch, his boxing ability alone would not have given him the career he has enjoyed.

The problem with Frank is that

weight was widely expected to lose yet again when he fought Oliver McCall for yet another stitched-up heavyweight championship. But he had worked like a Trojan for the fight, produced the performance of his life, stayed on his feet and won it, his reaction afterwards a clear indication that he felt vindicated.

"I always knew I could be World Champion," he said, behind a pair of shades hiding his injuries. That win set up a re-match with Tyson. "When Frank won the title, it meant a lot to the ordinary man in the street, the taxi driver and so on," says Frank Warren, his promoter. "If he beats Mike Tyson, it's the equivalent of England winning the World Cup in 1966."

But Bruno is not doing this for Britain. He is doing it for his own sense of pride. Tyson represents the pinnacle of boxing, the one heavyweight everyone fears with good reason ("He took some horrific punches that day," says Tyson of their previous encounter. "I just remember overwhelming him.") There is no need, financially, for Bruno to go anywhere near him. Yet he is prepared to risk all in his bid to prove himself more than the humbling horizontal he is widely

assumed to be. The paradox at the centre of Bruno's enormous effort is that he is seeking to rid himself of the image that has helped to make him famous.

The champion, angered by the manner in which he will receive only a fifth of the challenger's earnings for this bout, has been less than his usual co-operative self in helping the pre-match publicity. But in the few public utterances Bruno has made, his aim has become clear. The goadings of the Tyson camp ("thank you, Frank, for allowing Mike the privilege of knocking you out," sneered the American's manager) have landed home. At his last press conference the normally placid, polite, decorous Bruno gave the Tyson team an angry finger. What the clown craves more than anything, it seems, is respect.

Tomorrow morning most British hearts, Sun-reading or not, would love Bruno. This romantic truer, this paradigm of British pluck, to stick the finger up to the world and achieve the ultimate in his sport. But most British heads just hope the referee will be quick enough to move in before real damage is done.

The paradox at the centre of his enormous effort is that he wants to be rid of the image that helped to make him famous

ing of good and evil, light and dark. The paper has a hidden motive for talking the fight up to a degree unprecedented even in a sport that invented hype: the Sun plays an important role as sales promoter for Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV. This fight will be the first ever pay-for-view event in Britain: to sell it at £14.95 on top of the usual Sky subscription, the fight has been promoted as the biggest event in the history of the universe.

But even if there were not a

and adviser, Laura, Bruno has been happy to exploit that image commercially. He has never disguised his affection for a pound coin ("What are you doing this for?" an American journalist asked him on Wednesday. "For my family, myself, the Queen and the money.") The cuddly clown image has helped make him a rich man; pantomime, HP Sauce advertisements, commercial endorsements by the barrow-load have followed him around. Once he became a

he is not a natural fighter," says Henry Cooper. Indeed whenever he has come up against a class performer — James "Bonecrusher" Smith, Witherspoon, Tyson, Lewis — he has crumpled alarmingly, his eyes blanking, his knees buckling, a picture of awful vulnerability. And yet, defeat after embarrassing defeat, another stab at the big prize is always made available, because he is such a commercial success.

Last autumn the joke heavy-

## Car sexism just drives me crazy

Jojo Moyes, no stranger to oily rags, takes a spanner to the myth that motoring is a man's world

I heard the one about the woman who used to hang her handbag upon her choke pull and couldn't understand why her car got such a poor mileage to the gallon? Or the woman who was told she might need occasionally to top her car up with a pint of oil — and religiously poured in a pint every week until the car wouldn't work any more? Nearly every mechanic has. And if you're female, they'll tell you — with the proviso: "I don't want to have a go at you ladies, but ..."

Few people were surprised when an RAC survey this week announced that women were much more likely to be taken for a ride by their local garages. A third of complaints to the RAC about garages come from women; mechanics apparently regularly overcharge them for routine work and dismiss genuine complaints. After all, women aren't supposed to like cars. To ride in them as glamorous accessories: to drape showily across them at motor shows; to provide a market for the 1.1 litre supermarket runabout, yes. But actually to know about them, no.

"Garage mechanics are less likely to try it on with a male driver because there's always that possibility that he might know something," says the Automobile Association. "I'm afraid they just don't worry about that with women."

To be fair, many mechanics have just cause to be dismissive of women. An unscientific but intensive survey of young, smart, independent women revealed that five out of six could not change a wheel on their own cars.

"I took my car in for a service and the radio wasn't working," said one. "When it came out I paid the bill and they went through all the things they had sorted out — but all I cared about was that the radio still wasn't working."

"I'm totally clueless," said another. "I know I get ripped off every time I go to my dealership. But I don't want to go to my dad telling me how to do anything, so the only way I'd



The notion that women can't tell a spark plug from a fan belt has never been true Hulton Deutsch

learn was if I sneaked off to evening class. And I probably wouldn't do that unless something went seriously wrong and cost me loads of money."

Unfortunately, even when we are interested, we are not taken seriously. I am an example of the one in six who can change a wheel — and spark plugs, points and fuses. I am one of those sad people who actually enjoy messing around under the bonnet. Yet highway assistance men smile patronisingly when I tell them the damp is not in the distributor; and check it anyway. Mechanics ask me if my (fast) car is my boyfriend's.

Once, an old friend, 6ft 3 and as testosterone-filled as the best of them, asked me along when he and his father wanted to choose a new Audi. A succession of would-be sellers looked on bemused as a 5ft 3 girl peered inside their engines, ran cloth-covered mag-

nets over the bodywork and stuck her fingers up their exhausts. Then they directed their questions at my friend. But according to the AA, the notion of the motor as penis extension is willing. Many men are happy to take the passenger seat and admit to having no knowledge at all.

The AA says that lack of knowledge is virtually universal. "Unfortunately we've got the vast majority of the population going round in cars they don't understand," says a spokesman.

This is reflected in the fact that 8 million of us belong to the AA and more than 5 million to the RAC. Their roadside assistance teams are constantly astonished that we spend tens of thousands of pounds on vehicles to which we entrust our most precious cargo, which we drive at potentially lethal speeds, and about whose workings we know almost nothing.

And the problems we call them out for can be embarrassingly basic. "The main ones are the 'eternal battery' — everyone assumes that batteries will last for ever; people running out of petrol and tyre changes," says the AA. "The vast majority fill the car with petrol, may check the oil and water if they remember and think they're being responsible if they top up the washer bottle."

Women, it seems, are not the only ones phased by metal innards. Mindful of the ridicule that had ensued when I confessed to reading *Cosmo* magazine in bed, I didn't tell anyone, but one thirtysomething male, that I was buying an antique sports car. "I'm going to test it tomorrow," I confided to him. "Will you come and help?"

"Sure," he said, and when we arrived at the dealers: "But I don't know anything about cars." As I peered up incred-

ulously from under the sills. "I thought you just wanted one that was pretty."

I eventually settled on a K-registration MGB roadster. Bodywork: honest. Engine: no pinking or smoking. Original chrome features: easily resalable. Overdrive: rare on pre-1974 models. "I like the colour," he said.

"How do we put the roof down?" According to motoring organisations, the increasing complexity of the modern engine means that another male stereotype — the Saturday morning fiddler-under-the-hood — is a dying breed. "Almost all modern cars have a computer brain. The classic analogy is that a new BMW has in its engine management system a computer more advanced than the one that put a man on the moon," says the AA spokesman. "The complexity of modern cars means that even mechanics often don't know much about them. Routine maintenance is almost impossible now on a modern car. You could just about do an oil change, but most of it is electronics," he said.

But for those who find the idea of diving under a car bonnet almost as attractive as diving under the wheels, the outlook is not so depressing. The increasing popularity of fixed-price servicing for particular models means that customers are less likely to get ripped off. And technology means that the daunting complexity of today's engines is likely to be replaced over the years by something much more accessible.

"Ultimately the engine will probably be replaced by a number of black boxes. Car manufacturers will realise that in the end it's easier to replace the entire units," says the AA. "You will end up with a disposable engine that will sense when it is going wrong, send a signal directly to the AA and arrange a rendezvous."

A little black box is unlikely to tut-tut at your failure to check your oil pressure. It certainly won't tell jokes about your handbag.

## Many ways to mourn for Dunblane

This weekend offers us a chance to express our grief, says Richard Holloway

One of the most moving times in my life was a morning I spent at the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington. Those who know the memorial will remember how simple, yet overwhelming it is: a long, low, undulating cliff of black marble on which are inscribed the names of every American killed in Vietnam.

That morning I watched hundreds of people engaging with the memorial in an extraordinary number of ways. Some just stood and rubbed fingers over the name of the one they had loved and lost; others showed flowers into the cracks in the marble; yet others used tracing paper to capture a print of the loved one's name; many simply stood in silent grief looking at the only tangible reminder of a vanished life.

Death comes for us all but its effect is shattering and the death, especially the violent death, of the young is almost unendurable. One of the ways we endure is by acts of remembrance, sacramental gestures, ways of acknowledging, yet challenging, the evil that has befallen us.

On Thursday night, for example, my wife, Jean, chose her own way of commemorating those who died in Dunblane Primary School. She wrote a hymn, which ends with this verse:

When dark despair is all around  
And falling tears the only sound,  
Light one small flame of hope that still  
You walk with us, and always will

Enfold in love ever more  
All those we love, but see no more.

We must allow ourselves to weep beyond all consolation; we must act out loss, express it in movement, let our bodies speak the words we cannot find. That is why people bring flowers to the scene of a tragedy; that is why Dunblane Primary School today is blanketed with flowers and toys and heartbroken messages. We have to let our grief find physical expression. That's what we'll be doing tomorrow in churches all over Britain. People will stop what they are doing at home or on a walk by the river; they will hear the bells, look up and remember. And silence, perhaps a minute

of silence at 11am throughout the nation, will be important as a way of gathering, not our thoughts, but our grief into wordless prayer.

In some places candles, maybe 18 candles, will be lit by children as visible but silent prayers. People will write messages and place them in pots before the altar, but not to be read. Maybe they will be burned after the service. And they must be honest messages expressing anger as well as grief. "Why?" "God, I hate you today!" "Shalom" "Forgive".

And the churches mustn't use this outpouring of grief as a way of smuggling in their own message. We believe in a resurrection hope, a hope beyond all tragedy and regret. But we must also respect and stand

alongside the hopeless, and allow their grief to express itself in its own way. Many of them will be in our churches this weekend because they want to be part of the national mourning and because they acknowledge that churches, those "serious houses on serious earth", belong to everyone at times like this. They are places where our finitude and frailty can be acknowledged as in few other places.

I was in San Francisco the day Robert Kennedy was assassinated. I went into Grace Cathedral on Nob Hill to pray. They had placed the Stars and Stripes, draped in black silk, in front of a catafalque. I found myself weeping and I was far from alone. Tomorrow we'll weep in churches up and down the land and maybe some will realise for the first time what churches are really for.

The writer is Bishop of Edinburgh and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Jean Holloway, his wife, is a well-known hymn writer.

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## Yorkshire Water chief set for retirement at 52

PETER RODGERS  
Business Editor

Trevor Newton, the Yorkshire Water managing director who shot to notoriety for avoiding showers and baths during the drought last year, is to retire early at the end of May at the age of only 52.

This completes a clear-out of all but one member of the executive board of Yorkshire, Britain's most unpopular water company, which admitted last

month that its failure to cope with the drought had cost nearly £150m.

Yorkshire Water denied that Mr Newton had been evicted from his £127,000-a-year job as a result of the water supply fiasco last year, which has led to a public inquiry that starts on Monday. A spokeswoman said: "It is his decision, he has not been asked to leave, he has not been sacked."

Other changes at the top of the company were almost com-

plete, she said. "Trevor feels that it is the right moment to retire for himself and the company to let a new team get forward."

However, Mr Newton's departure is bound to be interpreted as the very least as a voluntary sacrifice in the face of massive public outrage at the company's performance.

His claims about not bathing or showering for three months during the drought also rebounded when he admitted that he had been crossing the

Yorkshire border to bathe at his parents and his in-laws' homes.

Mr Newton will not get a pay-off or a pension top-up and the company would give no indication of whether he had another job lined up.

Yorkshire also announced that Brandon Gough, former chairman of Coopers & Lybrand, the accountancy firm, is to take over as the £120,000-a-year non-executive chairman from Sir Gordon Jones next month. Mr Gough said he

would be looking to deliver "value for all stakeholders."

Sir Gordon, who is 69, said in December that he would be retiring within six months. He does not reach the latest retirement age of 70 until next February.

Mr Newton's own job as group managing director is not being filled and the company has no plans to look for a full replacement. Instead, Dr Kevin Bond, who is joining from the National Rivers Authority on 1

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April as managing director of Yorkshire Water Services, the main operating subsidiary, will step into Mr Newton's role as chairman. At the group board level, Mr Newton's role will be split between other directors.

Yorkshire Water said Mr Newton, who has been at the company for 20 years and, like Sir Gordon, saw it through privatisation in 1990, would receive a straightforward early-retirement pension. This would be under the water pension

scheme with no special benefits and no golden handshake. Like other Yorkshire Water board members, Mr Newton's earnings are modest by the millionaire standards of some big public groups. He has 25,000 share options, including 10,000 to which he subscribed under Yorkshire's employee ShareSave scheme and his total current profit if they were exercisable now would be £88,000 before tax. Comment, page 23



Trevor Newton: Taking early retirement at 52

## SFA hands Barings pair virtual blackballing

NIC CICUTTI

The Securities and Futures Authority yesterday came close to a City blackballing of Peter Baring, the chairman of Barings, and Andrew Tuckey, his deputy, for their stewardship of the collapsed bank.

The regulator officially cleared Mr Baring and Mr Tuckey of responsibility for the collapse of the 233-year-old bank. Nevertheless, both men were required to give the SFA "assurances" regarding the future.

Mr Baring, who is aged 60, has told the SFA that he does not intend to re-enter the investment industry. Mr Tuckey, aged 54, told the SFA he will not be seeking a position with an investment house that would require him to be registered with the watchdog as a senior executive or a director.

He will be allowed to continue in his current role as a corporate finance adviser. Since last year, Mr Tuckey's advisory work has brought him back to Barings, where he has been employed as a consultant reportedly earning more than £100,000 for his advice.

Richard Farrant, the SFA's chief executive, said that he had no objection to Mr Tuckey remaining at Barings, where he has helped the bank in its advisory role over the Lloyds Bank takeover of TSB Group.

"This is consistent with the undertaking he has given us,"

Mr Farrant said. "This is that if he wanted to be a director and it is exclusively in the field of corporate finance, he is welcome to apply to us. But he has indicated that he does not wish it to be in a wider capacity."

The SFA said: "By reasons of the positions they held, they were associated with the failure to detect and prevent the losses, and recognising this, both resigned from the board in April 1995, expressing their deep regrets."

A number of other former executives at Barings were yesterday facing disciplinary action by the Securities and Futures Authority, their regulator, for their part in the merchant bank's collapse.

The SFA said yesterday that the individuals concerned, which it refused to name, were being held responsible for the collapse. If found guilty, they risk being barred from ever working in the securities industry again.

Another individual known to have been cleared is Geoffrey Barnett, the former chief operating officer at the bank.

Barings was brought down in February last year by losses of some £860m run up by the rogue trader Nick Leeson in the high-risk derivatives market in Singapore. Leeson fled Singapore as the losses were discovered and surfaced in Frankfurt, Germany, several weeks later. After fighting a bitter battle



Scene of the crash: Barings' chairman and his deputy have had to give assurances to the SFA about their futures

against deportation, he was returned to Singapore. He is now serving a six-and-a-half-year sentence in the state's Changi prison after admitting two counts of cheating.

Barings was rescued last spring by the Dutch banking group ING, which paid £1 for control of the bank in return for shouldering the losses.

In April last year, 20 key Barings staff based in Singapore, Tokyo and London left the company. They included Ron Baker, head of the financial products group; Tony Gamby, head of settlements; Peter Norris, former head of securities; Geoffrey Broadhurst, finance director; and Brenda Granger, head of futures and options set-

tlements, all based in London. In Singapore, James Bax, regional manager for South-east Asia; Simon Jones, regional operations manager; and Rachel Young, financial controller, also resigned.

Several of them were among those investigated by the SFA. Mr Farrant yesterday declined to say which ones or whether

any of them had been cleared.

Mr George MacLean, the former head of the bank group, said yesterday: "I have received a bundle of papers which I have still not had time to examine fully. Until that time I am unable to comment."

An ING Barings spokeswoman said yesterday: "[We] are pleased that the SFA has reached the conclusion of their investigations into a number of current and former employees. The SFA is not currently considering any enforcement action against any person currently employed by ING Barings."

She defended the continued presence at the bank of Mr Tuckey. "He has no directorial or executive capacity and it is the case with any consultant that they make their recommendations and a director or executive takes a decision based on the recommendations."

Reports by the Bank of England and the Singaporean authorities last year both pointed the finger at his bosses for allowing him to break the bank. Comment, page 23



Cleared but restricted: Peter Baring (left) said he will not re-enter the industry. Andrew Tuckey said he will not seek a senior executive or director's position



## Rentokil steps up BET attack

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Rentokil yesterday stepped up the pressure in its £1.8bn hostile takeover bid for BET by strongly criticising the textile to security group's growth record and questioning its strategy.

In a document sent to BET shareholders yesterday, Rentokil said the conglomerate's recent earnings growth had been driven by a cyclical upturn in its plant services business and acquisitions, masking an "unimpressive" performance from most of the rest of the group.

Underlying trading margins have sunk from 6.5 per cent to 6.2 per cent between the 1995 interim results and last year, Rentokil claims. It says John Clark, BET's chief executive, had failed to deliver shareholder value, overseeing a 45 per cent underperformance in the share price against the rest of the market since his appointment in April 1991.

Clive Thompson, chief executive, also attacked BET's strategy changes. "Strategies are things which are supposed to last for years and years. Ours has been in place for 14 years now, theirs seems to change with the seasons."

Other areas of criticism included BET's plan to make the group debt-free by 1994, which Rentokil said had only been achieved through asset sales, a cut in capital expenditure and a call on shareholders. Since March 1994, cash flow had been negative and Rentokil suggested that a further rights issue might be necessary to finance BET's plans to make larger strategic acquisitions.

But Mr Clark hit back last night, calling the Rentokil document "short on strategy, long on soundbites and irrelevant historical comparisons".

Rentokil's shares dipped 5.5p to 343.5p yesterday, but the value of its share-and-cash bid of 194.6p remained marginally above BET's market price, which eased 0.5p to 194.5p.

## Rival buys Blue Arrow for £48m

NIGEL COPE

Blue Arrow, the employment agency that was at the centre of a City scandal and lengthy fraud trial in the late 1980s and early 1990s, has been sold for £48m to a rival recruitment company.

Corporate Services Group, a fast-growing employment company whose shares are listed on the USM, will take control of Blue Arrow's 80 branches which specialise in temporary jobs. It is buying the company from its

management, which acquired the company from the US group Manpower in 1991.

Jeffrey Fowler, chief executive of Corporate Services, said he would retain the Blue Arrow name but use the group's database to convert clients to the concept of contract labour - where a company contracts out certain functions to an external agency.

Corporate Services has developed a profitable niche in this area and boasts a blue-chip client list which includes banks,

electronics companies and government agencies. Mr Fowler estimates that the market is growing at around 35 per cent a year as the concept gains acceptance.

"We've placed doctors from South Africa into British hospitals and taken UK engineers to Japan. And we're doing all this from places like London and Barking. People are starting to understand this concept and we've barely started yet."

The company is paying £35m in cash for Blue Arrow, with the balance paid in shares. It is

funding the deal through a placing and open offer of 45 million shares at 110p.

Corporate Services has grown rapidly in recent years. Last year it bought four companies for a total of £15m. The group made profits of £8.4m on sales of £133m. The combined company will have sales in excess of £300m.

The shares have risen from 13p three years ago to 126p, up almost 4.5p yesterday. They have risen by more than 50 per cent this year alone.

## Rate cut escalates building society war

Yorkshire, the UK's tenth-largest building society, yesterday piled the pressure on its rivals that are abandoning mutual status and converting into banks, by announcing a cut in its variable mortgage rates to a new low of 6.99 per cent, writes Nic Cicutti.

The society's move places it alongside Bradford & Bingley and Nationwide, which have already dropped the cost of their

home loans to the same level.

Yorkshire's cut from 7.39 per cent, worth more than £10 a month off the cost of a typical £50,000 loan, takes effect on 1 April for its 150,000 borrowers on variable rates.

David Anderson, a general manager at Yorkshire, said: "There is now clear blue water emerging between those societies which intend to remain mutual and those which plan to

or have already converted to, plc status."

"We believe that lenders with external shareholders will inevitably give a worse deal to customers. The Yorkshire is optimistic that [our] investment levels will not need to be reduced following this latest move."

His comments come as three of the top four building societies - Halifax, Woolwich and

Alliance & Leicester - prepare for a public flotation next year. All of them now charge 7.25 per cent to variable rate borrowers.

Separately, Woolwich Building Society yesterday sold its 16-strong chain of upmarket estate agents, Chestertons residential, for £8m. The deal returns the chain to Chesterton International, the group which sold it to Prudential in 1986.

## US economy warms up for the spring

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Editor

The American economy showed further signs of awakening from its winter hibernation with a surge in industrial output in February and improved consumer confidence.

Even though separate figures showed that inflation remained very subdued last month, Treasury bonds and Wall Street fell in reaction. The new evidence of faster growth dashed any remaining hopes that the Federal Reserve would soon cut interest rates.

"We are living in the best of all possible worlds and worrying about it a lot," said Russell Sheldon, an economist at Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh.

Last month's rise in factory output was the biggest for nine years, partly due to a rebound from January's blizzard-related decline. Manufacturing production increased by 1.4 per cent after a 0.3 per cent decline in January. Total industrial output, which also includes mining and utilities, was 1.2 per cent higher in February, while the previous month's drop was revised from 0.6 to 0.4 per cent.

Taking the two months together, most of the improvement was concentrated in business equipment and durable goods, including computers, home appliances and cars and trucks.

There was also a recovery in aircraft production following the end of a long strike at Boeing. The end of the strike accounts for about a third of the increase in output so far this year.

The strike, the weather, and the fact that components of yesterday's production measure were calculated using last week's surprisingly strong jobs figures made some economists cautious about leaping to conclusions. "The economy could be stronger than we thought, but it is too soon to get excited about it," said Suzanne Rizzo at HSBC Markets in New York.

But others were willing to say growth was picking up. James O'Sullivan at JP Morgan said: "The message is that the economy is bouncing back. The figures exaggerate it but the point is right." This interpretation was lent weight by an increase in one of the main consumer confidence indicators, the University of Michigan sentiment index. It climbed from 88.5 in February to 95.7 in March.

Further benign inflation figures did nothing to lift spirits in the financial markets. Consumer prices rose 0.2 per cent in February, leaving the annual inflation rate unchanged at 2.7 per cent. The "core" inflation rate, excluding food and energy, has been flat at around 3 per cent for the past three years. Comment, page 23

STOCK MARKETS									
FT-SE 100		Dow Jones*		Nikkei		Hang Seng		Frankfurt	
3750	3750	5620	5620	21090	21090	10000	10000	10000	10000
3750	3750	5620	5620	21090	21090	10000	10000	10000	10000
3750	3750	5620	5620	21090	21090	10000	10000	10000	10000
3750	3750	5620	5620	21090	21090	10000	10000	10000	10000
3750	3750	5620	5620	21090	21090	10000	10000	10000	10000
3750	3750	5620	5620	21090	21090	10000	10000	10000	10000
3750	3750	5620	5620	21090	21090	10000	10000	10000	10000
3750	3750	5620	5620	21090	21090	10000	10000	10000	10000
3750	3750	5620	5620	21090	21090	10000	10000	10000	10000

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling*		UK medium gilt		US long bond		Money Market Rates		Bond Yields*	
6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term

CURRENCIES									
£/\$		£/DM		£/¥		Pound		Dollar	
1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change
1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change
1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change
1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change
1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change
1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change
1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change
1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change
1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	1.5238	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change

Weekend Money section									
Investment: making sense of market movements		PC banking or TV banking: a look into the future		Surplus insurance funds: whose money is it anyway?		PEPs galore: examining the options			
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## COMMENT

'Either the SFA believes Mr Tuckey is accountable, in which case he should be properly blackballed, or it does not, in which case he should be fully cleared'

# Old school tie fudges the issue of fair treatment

The City practice of blackballing has always been an imperfect and unsatisfactory one. It works like this. The Bank of England or one of the other City regulators decides you are not fit and proper to hold a position of responsibility in the City or offer investment advice. It is not necessarily obliged to give any reasons and most of the time does not. In the Bank of England's case there is a lengthy and mysterious appeals procedure, all heard in private you understand, which most agree breaches all principles of natural justice. But so what, it might be said. Whatever the system's faults, if it succeeds in keeping the rotten apple out of the barrel, then it can be no bad thing.

Now, courtesy of the Securities and Futures Authority, we have a new twist – the blackballing which is not a blackballing. Thus Peter Baring and Andrew Tuckey, though cleared of responsibility for the failure of their bank (a subtle point, this, since it was they who ran the show), have been asked for assurances that they will not seek to re-enter the investment industry. Mr Baring has given that undertaking but Mr Tuckey has not.

In Mr Tuckey's case a compromise has been agreed. If he limits himself to corporate finance advice, then he's OK. While this will clearly restrict him, it is obviously a fudge bordering on a show of old-school tie favouritism. Mr Tuckey has continued to work for Barings as a consultant, despite all that has happened. Either the SFA believes Mr Tuckey is accountable, in which case he

should be properly blackballed, or it does not, in which case he should be fully cleared. Proper rules and guidelines need to be laid down in this area. If the City is going to blackball, the process has to be seen as fair and equitable. The other ranks, meanwhile, look set to get it in the neck. The SFA's silence on the others can only mean it intends disciplinary action against them.

## Yorkshire finally grasps the nettle

It has taken Yorkshire Water longer than it might have done, but finally the nettle has been grasped and the two most senior positions in the company, chairman and managing director, are to be vacated and filled with new blood. There is always the possibility, of course, that Yorkshire will receive a takeover approach, that Sir Gordon Jones and Trevor Newton, like Keith Court at South West Water, will have to be "persuaded" against retirement so that the board can be manned and the invading hoards seen off.

Joking apart though, the oddest thing about the Yorkshire duo's departure is that the company won't admit it has anything to do with last year's drought. No, neither has been sacked, the company insists, they are just retiring. Cute stuff this. While it may be just about believable in the case of Sir Gordon Jones, who is in his late sixties, it is not in Mr

Newton's. He is just 52 and gold plated though the remuneration packages of utility bosses tend to be, that is not an age at which anyone willingly retires.

Mr Newton is the man who famously urged his customers not to take baths, and then was caught taking one himself in a neighbouring water region. In his public relations, Mr Newton was plainly inept. This was also the man who at one stage was spending hundreds of thousands a week tankering water around Yorkshire to cope with the company's inadequately prepared water infrastructure.

There is another odd feature about all this, however. Normally managements are turfed out because of discontent among shareholders. That is not the case with Yorkshire where the City was generally supportive of incumbent management throughout last year's drought. Ironically, Yorkshire's management was thought of as amongst the most enlightened and sensitive of the water companies. Furthermore, neither man is leaving with any kind of pay-off or pension top up. In that sense they are genuinely "retiring", doing the honourable thing after a year in which they were lambasted and ridiculed by their customers for failure to anticipate the drought. Their departure has nothing to do with failure to deliver shareholder value.

Nor are their successors – Brandon Gough and Kevin Bond – the utility fat cats of legend. The new chairman comes in at "just" £120,000 a year and Mr Bond at £135,000, no options, no bonuses and no long-term incentive pack-

ages. These are not large sums for a company of Yorkshire's size – it is honest pay for an honest job. Could this be stakeholder capitalism in practice? Neither the departures nor the rates of pay reflect the normal priorities of the City. Rather, they are a response to the demands of ordinary customers.

## US prospects suggest a happy ending

It has all the hallmarks of a disaster movie; the runway lies directly ahead, but the pilot cannot see in front of him, the panels are giving erratic readings and there is a blizzard buffeting the aircraft. The story of the US economy has been a cliffhanger for the past six months or more, but after the latest figures the soft landing scenario is coming to seem the most likely once again. The pace of activity is now showing clear signs of picking up after lingering dangerously close to recession. Inflation is low and will remain so – at least until much later in 1996. Like the movies, a happy ending is in prospect.

The markets do not like it, of course. They would have preferred a crash landing guaranteeing the demise of inflation and an injection of cheap money to revive the economy. This is short-termism with a vengeance. What could be better for the profitability of American companies than faster growth with inflation well under control? The stock market has been overlooking the fact that the tilt

towards recession which would have led to lower interest rates was starting to hit profits too. Fourth-quarter earnings have disappointed analysts' expectations. The fact that the economy appears to have pulled out of the nosedive will help improve earnings this quarter. The pick-up might carry the penalty of higher inflation towards the end of the year but there is no sign of it yet. Meanwhile, chief pilot Alan Greenspan has his craft back under control.

## Fokker's failure cheers the sceptics

Euro sceptics are bound to take heart from Fokker's predicament. It will confirm their claims about the impact on industry of joining a strong and rigid currency area dominated by the mark. Fokker is certainly a case study in how a middle-ranking company, operating in a world-wide dollar-based market, is likely to have a dreadful time if it is based in whose currency is hampered to the mark. But this was not the only factor behind Fokker's demise. Daimler-Benz Aerospace, the controlling shareholder, also failed to get a grip on strategy. It spurned the Franco-Italian ATR consortium's attempt to consolidate the European feeder aircraft industry to reduce costs and strengthen marketing. Instead, it demanded that the business should be concentrated around Fokker and Dornier. DASA's turbo-prop subsidiary, That sealed Fokker's fate.

# Wembley stays in the red with £8m hangover

NIGEL COPE

An increase in the number of pop concerts – including several by Rod Stewart, the Rolling Stones and Bon Jovi – helped increase operating profits at leisure group Wembley last year, though restructuring charges still dragged the troubled company to an £8m loss.

The company is awaiting the decision of the Sports Council on whether Wembley or Manchester will be chosen as the preferred location for the new National Stadium. Wembley expects the long-delayed decision in the next few months and the board said yesterday that it had "an extremely strong case".

The 72-year-old stadium has already beat off rival bids from Birmingham, Sheffield and Bradford and is now in a two horse race.

Finance director Nigel Potter dismissed suggestions that the company's future relied upon winning the nomination. "In the short to medium term it would have little or no impact because we have contracts with the FA for major events that last until 2002," he said. "Whichever way the decision falls Wembley Stadium will always be an attractive international location for sports and entertainment events."

Wembley said the appointment of Peter Mead, a director

of the advertising agency Abbott Mead Vickers as a non executive director last week would boost its marketing campaigns. Jarvis Astaire, the showbusiness impresario, will remain on the board and draw on his contacts in political circles to help Wembley's case.

In the year to December 1995 Wembley reduced its losses to £8m compared to the previous year's £35m. The loss is attributable to the cost of re-financing of the group last year.

Operating profits increased from £11.7m to £19.7m boosted by seven pop concerts held during the year, compared to



Making the assets sweat: chairman Claes Hultman

none in 1994. The total number of events rose from 22 to 29.

Bookings for 1996 are also ahead of last year at both Wembley Arena and the stadium. Concerts confirmed for this year include Tina Turner, The Eagles and the Three Tenors. Six European Championship football fixtures are also scheduled for Wembley this summer.

Profits at the US greyhound racing tracks have been boosted by a full year contribution from 856 video lottery terminals at the venue in Lincoln, Rhode Island.

Sales and profits were down at the UK greyhound racing tracks with Wembley blaming the fall on the National Lottery.

Chairman Claes Hultman said the company had generated £23m of free cash flow last year and reduced its gearing to 42 per cent compared to last year's level of 323 per cent. Its borrowings now stand at £65m. He stressed that no acquisitions would be made. "We have plenty of ideas to make these assets sweat," he said.

Last year was traumatic for Wembley. As well as a re-financing and a £35m loss it included the departure of long standing chairman Sir Brian Wolfson and five others including Sir Peter Thompson and Alex McCrindle. Alan Coppin was appointed chief executive.

The shares closed 2p down at 365p last night.

## French wine sales shrug off adverse atoll test reaction



French wine and spirits exports in 1995 increased by 1.5 per cent to 34.5bn francs (£4.7bn), despite a boycott campaign in protest against nuclear tests in the South Pacific. The protest is estimated to have resulted in the loss of FF750m worth of exports, and stopped 1995 being a record year. Effects of the boycott were particularly felt in Scandinavia,

the Netherlands and Canada. However, Japan, which was highly critical of the tests, saw sales of Bordeaux and Burgundy wines and Champagne increase by 11.4 per cent to more than FF1bn. Germany, where the anti-nuclear lobby is strong, remained the biggest importer of French wine and spirits in volume and the third in value, behind the UK and the US.

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

# Horrors hide Mowlem's brighter hopes

At first blush this looks like yet another horror story from Mowlem, for whom 1994's small profit was little more than a blip in an otherwise relentless string of heavy losses. Actually, most of the bad news was known six months ago and prospects are as bright as the company as most people can remember. That is not saying much of course – but it does appear that Mowlem, one of the construction industry's biggest disasters, finally has a chairman and chief executive who have some idea where they are trying to take it.

The company has a viable structure, with a collection of some quite nicely profitable businesses, and has got rid of most of its non-performers – including the ill-fated London City Airport, which added a £5.8m exceptional loss into these figures to take the total one-off charge for the year to £38.4m.

That pushed Mowlem back into familiar red territory, resulting in a pre-tax loss for the year of £30m compared with 1994's £4.8m profit. Despite a chunky 17.6p loss per share, the 2p dividend was maintained.

Ken Minton was too diplomatic to say so yesterday but the industry he has entered, after a successful stint in chemicals with Laporte, is a complete shambles. In which other business could a company make a profit of £300,000 from sales of £967m, as Mowlem's contracting arm did?

It is a shame that the core division is so dismal because elsewhere in the group there are some interesting and profitable companies. Brightest of those is the environmental services division, which, as a market leader in geotechnical consultancy work and contaminated land testing, generates an enviable return on sales. Profits of £3.2m were struck in 1995 from sales of £23m.

Facilities management, which was acquired three years ago, chipped in a useful £3.5m from sales of £125m. Access products – scaffolding and ladders – had a good year, pushing profits up from £10m to £13.4m after sales jumped to £239m (£213m).

These were all good performances but the key to Mowlem is plainly whether or not it can squeeze even a modest return from its substantial contracting turnover.

Mr Minton believes a margin of between 2 and 3 per cent is possible, which even at the lower end would double group operating profits.

It is that potential that has seen Mowlem's shares nudge up from their recent low of under 60p to yesterday's 79p, up 5p. At that level, and on the basis of a forecast of perhaps £13m profits this year, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of about 13.

If you believe that Mr Minton has really cleared out the drags and set up a recovery, the shares have a way to go. After the recent performance, however, it is a sizeable if.

## Molins rolls up record profits

Most of the City stopped following Molins years ago, after five successive bids suggested its days as an independent company were numbered. But analysts have missed a trick. The cigarette machinery group successfully saw off all the would-be predators and since 1991 the share price has tripled, outperforming the market by 50 per cent in the past 12 months alone.

Yesterday's figures – which sent the shares another 21p higher to an all-time peak of 900p – should revive in-

terest in the group. Pre-tax profits rose by 24 per cent to £29.8m in the year to December, on sales 28 per cent up at £36m.

The figures were distorted by a change in the treatment of Molins' £51.3m pension surplus, which cut the credit to profits from £3.3m to £0.1m this year. But that was more than offset by the first significant contribution of £3.8m from Sandiacre Packing Machinery, which was acquired for £28m in 1994.

Stripping that lot out, it is clear that the businesses are still growing. The core tobacco machinery operation should be mature, yet it managed a 25 per cent increase in sales in 1995. Operating profits of £23m, up 12 per cent, were affected by the pension changes and underlying margins are said to be slightly ahead.

Cigarette consumption in the Western world is barely growing and this

week's Liggett settlement could badly dent the big tobacco companies' profits. But Molins points out that these pressures could spell good news for suppliers of increasingly sophisticated machinery like itself, as the drive to reduce costs intensifies. Meanwhile, third world demand, already solidly underpinned by soaring consumption of cigarettes, is magnified by moves from hand-rolled to machine-rolled product.

The corrugated board machinery division continued last year's improvement. Increased demand eliminated losses in Bristol and raised operating returns from the US business, which commands around 30 per cent of the domestic market. Profits jumped 40 per cent to £6m.

More exciting, though, is packaging machinery, which is effectively a new operation centred on Sandiacre. The latter has fully lived up to expectations at the time of purchase, although the results have been affected by the costs of expanding the new business and higher development spending. Molins believes that it can cover off its high-speed cigarette-making technology and world-wide marketing network to create a new business serving the multinational food industry. Pyramid-shaped tea bags for Unilever's PG Tips and bags for frozen catfish are just two applications so far developed. The group is now looking for bolt-on acquisitions "measured in tens of millions of pounds" to broaden the range.

With order books 13 per cent ahead and a competent new management team in place, there looks plenty to go for at Molins. Charterhouse Tilney reckons profits could come close to £34m this year, putting the shares on a modest forward p/e of 12. Still good value.

## J Mowlem: at a glance

Market value: £138m, share price 79p

Five year record	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Turnover (£bn)	1.39	1.24	1.34	1.36	1.49
Pre-tax profits (£m)	-18.9	-36.5	-124.2	4.8	30.0
Earnings per share (pence)	-6.1	-37.3	-111.5	2.1	17.6
Dividends per share (pence)	19.5	4.0	2.0	2.0	2.0

## Operating profits

by segment, £m



## Share price

pence



## IN BRIEF

### Options profit for Mirror Group chief

David Montgomery, chief executive of the Mirror Group, has made a £780,000 profit from exercising options on 500,000 shares. The option price was 61p, and the shares were sold at 217p each. He still retains his existing holding of 200,999 shares. The share price of the Mirror Group, which owns 43 per cent of the Independent, closed 8p lower at 217p yesterday.

### Big Board rethinks 'circuit breaker' limits

The New York Stock Exchange is considering increasing the current 250-point limit in the Dow Jones Industrial Index that triggers the "circuit breaker" – a one-hour shutdown in trading. Richard Grasso, chairman of the exchange, said that there was a "dramatic difference" between the index levels and market activity in the stock market now and when the trading rules were introduced after the crash of 1987. At that time, a 250-point fall represented a move of 12 per cent, compared with a move of about 4.5 per cent at the index's current levels.

### Mixed signals from Japanese economy

Japan's industrial output was flat in January, revised down from the preliminary estimate of a 0.5 per cent rise, highlighting the tentative nature of the economy's recovery. Production was 2.8 per cent higher than a year earlier, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry said it was likely to grow 0.2 per cent in the January-March quarter. Separate figures showed that the debt of bankrupt companies increased 62.6 per cent compared with the previous February. But the number of bankruptcies fell.

### Zeneca acquires migraine drug

Zeneca has agreed to acquire 311C90, a migraine treatment, from Glaxo Wellcome. The price was not disclosed, but Glaxo said the product is valued in its accounts at £150m. The deal is subject to approval by the US Federal Trade Commission. Further payments to Glaxo Wellcome may be due, dependent upon sales levels.

### British Steel buys rail works

British Steel has bought BR's Castleton Long Welded Rail and Track Works. Castleton makes lengths of welded rail and pre-assembled track layout. The company employs 24, and has annual turnover of £11m. The sale brings the total of BR companies sold to 40, with collective annual sales of more than £3bn.

### Cornhill profits rise to £73m

Cornhill, part of the Allianz Group, Europe's largest insurer, warned of the negative impact of continuing price wars on the insurance market, despite a 12 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £73.5m last year. The company said it was also worried about new actuarial tables which could leave the industry facing massively increased personal injury awards. The industry has calculated that the extra cost of using the tables for outstanding motor injury claims alone could be more than £200m.

### Losses soar at Bell Cablemedia

Cable television and telephone company Bell Cablemedia announced losses in 1995 of £47.4m, compared to losses of £26.4m a year earlier, as it continued to build its network. The loss included a net gain of £9m from the flotation of Videotext, another cable company, last year. Average monthly residential telephone revenue per line in 1995 was £27.54, up 8 per cent on the year. Average monthly cable television revenue per subscriber was £20.86, an increase of 4 per cent.

## COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Anglo Continental (P)	80.1m (80.3m)	3.7m (2.5m)	17.5p (11.5p)	6.25p
British Data Management (P)	4.48m (4.82m)	1.55m (0.5m)	4.28p (1.47p)	1.85p (1.85p)
Charterhouse Int'l (P)	-	-0.16m (0.13m)	-0.2p (0.1p)	1p (1p)
Dunlop Group (P)	15.8m (16.27m)	0.95m (1.01m)	5.23p (4.55p)	2p (1.5p)
Johnson & Johnson (P)	175m (170m)	15.4m (14.3m)	21.95p (15.15p)	11.2p (10.8p)
Molins (P)	285m (224m)	23.8m (24.5m)	65.4p (67.8p)	20p (17p)
John Shaw (P)	1.45m (1.22m)	-30.0m (4.5m)	-17.4p (8.1p)	2p (2p)
Perry Group (P)	414m (382m)	6.55m (5.07m)	16.8p (13.3p)	5p (7.5p)
Shell (P)	21.0m (20.7m)	4.40m (1.26m)	6.5p (1.7p)	nil
Wendy (P)	123m (120m)	-8.15m (-55.5m)	-16.5p (-303.4p)	nil

(P) = Profit (L) = Loss (L) = Latest figures 10 mths, comparative 12 mths



## Notice to Borrowers

### New Rates of Interest

The rate of interest charged on existing variable rate mortgages will be decreased by 0.25% pa gross with effect from 1 April 1996.

Borrowers in the Budget Repayment Scheme do not require to take any action at this time.

Notices will be issued to borrowers outwith the Scheme.

The Society's new basic rate is 7.24% pa gross.

Dunfermline Building Society - Cathedral House

Carnegie Avenue, Dunfermline KY11 5PU Tel 01593 627727

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# market report/shares

## DATA BANK

FT-SE 100  
3,644.8 -37.0

FT-SE 250  
4,227.2 -5.7

FT-SE 350  
1,832.8 -15.1

SEAQ VOLUME  
793.9m shares,  
35,311 bargains

Gilts Index  
92.31 -0.11

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## Low spirits bring on sober mood at Allied Domecq

These are sobering days for Allied Domecq, the accident-prone drink and retailing giant. Its shares tumbled 16.5p to 480.5p, just a fraction above its 12-month low.

Depressed European spirit sales, renewed talk of management upheavals and sell advice from SBC Warburg did much of the damage. Flat figures from Seagram, the Canadian spirit giant, underlined the difficulties that spirit groups are experiencing in Europe.

Allied, with such brands as Beefeater and Teacher, has the biggest European exposure of the big three spirit groups. It is estimated that 25 per cent of its sales go to the Continent, compared with Grand Metropolitan's 20 per cent, with Guinness, rolling out year's figures next week, down to 3 per cent.

Michael Jackman, Allied's retiring chairman, has already

warned that profits will be down 20 per cent, partly because of sluggish sales in Europe. The Seagram comments could indicate that trading is now even more difficult than when Mr Jackman issued his warning last month.

Allied's shares have sharply underperformed the stock market in the 1990s. The group suffered a £147m foreign exchange loss and its £700m acquisition of Pedro Domecq, the Spanish brandy and sherry group with extensive interests in Mexico, has been a disappointment. The takeover occurred just before the Mexican economy came under pressure and the peso collapsed.

Even the group's sale of its food division has attracted criticism, with observers complaining that Allied should have been able to command higher prices. Sir Christopher Hogg, who is due to become



### MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

Allied's chairman next month, will it be argued, be forced to make extensive management changes. There is also the possibility that he will undertake a demerger, dividing the spirit and retailing businesses. Sir Christopher successfully split Courtauld into chemical and textile companies.

If Allied does not get its act together it will almost certainly attract a takeover bid. It is valued at around £5bn and, with its host of brands, must look a tempting target.

Guinness is expected to produce a modest profit advance - around £94.2m against £91.5m last year.

The rest of the market had

a sombre session, suggesting that Thursday's surge was, in fact, a dead cat bounce. The FT-SE 100 index fell 37 points to 3,644.8, with nervousness about New York creating much of the damage. Many traders were worried that New York's triple witching - the expiry of stock futures and index options, could be difficult.

British Steel was the best-performing blue chip, climbing 5.75p to 191.25p on renewed talk of a share buy-back and US buying. Lasso, on lingering bid hopes, rose 4.5p to 187p and Burton, said to be near to mounting a strike, gained 3p to 140.5p. Austin Reed, un-

changed at 208p, is the rumoured target. Hambros, the merchant bank, firmed to 233p. It has performed powerfully in recent weeks as bid hopes have resurfaced.

United Biscuits gained 9.5p to 242p on hopes that a bidder will emerge to put it out of its misery. Cable and Wireless, 6.5p higher at 475.5p, was another reflecting bid hopes.

Alvis, the defence group, jumped 9p to a 172p peak on talk of bids from GKN or Vespene. Thornycroft, the group is thought to be trading strongly, its shares were around 40p last year.

After the market closed Siebe, the engineer, disclosed that it had acquired 25 per cent of Unitech, a maker of electronic components, and wants to bid for the rest. It paid 590p a share against 515p (up 9.5p) in the market. The stake was sold by Electrowatt, the Swiss group, which was known to be

seeking a buyer. It is also looking to sell a 42 per cent interest in Eurodis Electronica, up 2p to 284p.

But takeover excitement evaporated at Zeneca, off 19p at 1.383p. Glaxo Wellcome was back in the doldrums, down 22.5p at 803.5p; Shield Diagnostics rose 17p to 163p on Nomura support. BAT Industries fell 14.5p to 500p. It is meeting analysts and fund managers on Monday to outline its US health litigation case.

Aberdeen Trust was firm at 141p, with some expecting a Jupiter Tyndall bid on Monday. The investment group, controlled by Commerzbank, has nearly 30 per cent.

Bluebird, the toy group, shaded to 298p as SBC Warburg carried out the signalled share buy-back at 304p. Dary, a safety glass maker, gained 6p to 67p. Lower profits were accompanied by an upbeat

### TAKING STOCK

□Jarvis, the construction and property group, admitted it was hoping to make a substantial acquisition. The shares gained 2.5p to 32.5p. One suggestion is that it could be buying a railway maintenance business, on similar lines to the deal by Amey, the road group.

□SkyePharma, the drugs group being developed by Ian Gowrie Smith shaded to 9p. It is on the verge of its second acquisition since the former Madava man moved in last year. Because of the size of the deal SkyePharma shares are likely to be suspended.

□Glencrowton, the pots and pans distributor which has moved into pubs, gained 4p to 62p. Its next acquisition is likely to be a chain of theme pubs to add to the 16 catering pubs, acquired for £6.1m.

### Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details as for 1995. Ex-dividend as Ex-All United Securities Market's Suspended 10p Parity Paid per 10 Paid Shares. Source: Firstcall.

### The Independent Index

The index shows you to access real-time share prices by phone from Seis. Simply dial 0891 111 924, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 111 924 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

Anyone with a land-line telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 111 924. For assistance, call our helpline 071 673 4375 (8.30am - 5.30pm). Calls cost 39p per minute (cheap rate), and 49p at all other times. Call charges include

### Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume
BT	100,000	British Gas	100,000	British Telecom	100,000	British Airways	100,000
British Airways	100,000	British Airways	100,000	British Airways	100,000	British Airways	100,000
British Airways	100,000	British Airways	100,000	British Airways	100,000	British Airways	100,000
British Airways	100,000	British Airways	100,000	British Airways	100,000	British Airways	100,000

### FT-SE 100 index hour by hour

Open 3678.2 down 25  
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## THE INDEPENDENT PREMIUM BOND CHECKLINE

There is £12 million worth of Premium Bond prize money waiting to be claimed, hundreds of thousands of unpaid numbers exist. Do you hold a winning bond? Dig out your old bonds and find out by calling:

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### Oil Exploration

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# unit trusts/data

## Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK	Spot
Australia	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750
Canada	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
France	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Germany	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Italy	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00
Netherlands	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037
Spain	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64
Sweden	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663
Switzerland	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363
UK	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936
US	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936

## Other Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK	Spot
Argentina	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750
Brazil	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
Canada	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
France	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Germany	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Italy	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00
Netherlands	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037
Spain	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64
Sweden	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663
Switzerland	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363
UK	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936
US	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936

## Tourist Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK	Spot
Argentina	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750
Brazil	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
Canada	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
France	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Germany	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Italy	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00
Netherlands	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037
Spain	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64
Sweden	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663
Switzerland	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363
UK	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936
US	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936

## Interest Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK	Spot
Argentina	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750
Brazil	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
Canada	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
France	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Germany	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Italy	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00
Netherlands	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037
Spain	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64
Sweden	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663
Switzerland	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363
UK	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936
US	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936

## Bond Yields

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK	Spot
Argentina	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750
Brazil	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
Canada	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
France	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Germany	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Italy	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00
Netherlands	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037
Spain	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64
Sweden	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663
Switzerland	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363
UK	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936
US	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936

## Money Market Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK	Spot
Argentina	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750	1.5750
Brazil	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
Canada	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100	0.7100
France	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Germany	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Italy	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363	1.9363
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00
Netherlands	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037
Spain	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64	166.64
Sweden	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663
Switzerland	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363	1.7363
UK	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936
US	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936	0.7936

## Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est. Cont. traded	Open interest
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

## Liffe FT-SE Index Option

Settlement price	365.0	365.0	365.0	365.0	Call/Put
Series	365.0	365.0	365.0	365.0	Call/Put
Month	365.0	365.0	365.0	365.0	Call/Put
Year	365.0	365.0	365.0	365.0	Call/Put
June	365.0	365.0	365.0	365.0	Call/Put

## Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change	Volume	Open interest
Crude Oil	25.00	+0.50	1000	1000
Natural Gas	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Gold	350.00	+5.00	200	200
Silver	15.00	+0.50	100	100
Copper	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Aluminum	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Zinc	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Lead	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Nickel	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Platinum	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Palladium	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Crude Oil	25.00	+0.50	1000	1000
Natural Gas	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Gold	350.00	+5.00	200	200
Silver	15.00	+0.50	100	100
Copper	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Aluminum	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Zinc	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Lead	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Nickel	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Platinum	1.50	+0.05	500	500
Palladium	1.50	+0.05	500	500

## 100 Largest Insurance Funds

Mar	27%	Mar	26%	May	17.5%	May	17.5%	May	22.9%	
Apr	63%	May	66%	May	19.3%	Apr	17.5%	May	21%	
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	22.5%	Jun	23.0%	
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	281	
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
Oct	23830	Oct	1790	Oct	1430	Oct	1700	Oct	1700	39320-39320
Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
Other Sales (Millions)										
Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
Oct	23830	Oct	1790	Oct	1430	Oct	1700	Oct	1700	39320-39320
Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
Other Sales (Millions)										
Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
Oct	23830	Oct	1790	Oct	1430	Oct	1700	Oct	1700	39320-39320
Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
Other Sales (Millions)										
Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
Oct	23830	Oct	1790	Oct	1430	Oct	1700	Oct	1700	39320-39320
Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
Other Sales (Millions)										
Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
Oct	23830	Oct	1790	Oct	1430	Oct	1700	Oct	1700	39320-39320
Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
Other Sales (Millions)										
Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
Oct	23830	Oct	1790	Oct	1430	Oct	1700	Oct	1700	39320-39320
Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
Other Sales (Millions)										
Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
Oct	23830	Oct	1790	Oct	1430	Oct	1700	Oct	1700	39320-39320
Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
Other Sales (Millions)										
Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
Oct	23830	Oct	1790	Oct	1430	Oct	1700	Oct	1700	39320-39320
Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
Other Sales (Millions)										
Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
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Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
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Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
May	1518	May	1518	May	1518	May	1700	May	1700	39320-39320
Oct	23830	Oct	1790	Oct	1430	Oct	1700	Oct	1700	39320-39320
Vol	1,671	Vol	6	Vol	1363	Vol	270	Vol	270	39320-39320
Other Sales (Millions)										
Mar	26%	Mar	26%	Apr	14%	Apr	14%	May	14%	26%
Apr	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
May	63%	May	63%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	May	19.3%	26%
Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	Vol	15.8%	281
White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight		Wheat		Wheat		Cocoa		1329 Beans
LCB	Estimate	LCB	LCB	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB	Estimate	LCB
May	39320	May	1930	May	1630	May	1550	H-40		Central
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Vol	3,294	Vol	3,294	Vol	15.8%	Vol				











## international

# UN targets aid to build a new Africa

DAVID ORR  
Nairobi

The United Nations biggest ever campaign for the development of Africa – recognised as “the world’s foremost development challenge” – was unveiled amid much fanfare yesterday.

The so-called Special Initiative on Africa was launched by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, in tandem with the World Bank and UN agencies in Nairobi, Geneva, New York, Paris and Rome.

“Now is the time for the United Nations and international community as a whole to stand together with Africa,” he said. “Now is the time for us to forge a new partnership.”

“We want today to tell Africa solemnly it isn’t alone, it isn’t abandoned, it is more than ever in the sight of the world... I’m not appealing to the gen-

erosity of the international community, I’m appealing to its conscience,” he said.

The programme, whose estimated cost over a 10-year period is \$25bn, aims to expand basic education and health care, to promote peace and better governance, and to improve water and food security.

The huge cost of the initiative will have to come from a redirection of existing UN resources and from a readjustment of African governments’ often much-criticised spending priorities.

It will also require fresh financing from Western governments equivalent to about 20 per cent of current development aid flows to Africa. The sources of funding, given the UN’s current financial difficulties and the pressure on aid budgets, are vague.

Despite the upbeat tone of the initiative, which suggests

that Africa’s prospects for economic recovery are better than ever, the continent remains the only one where, on UN measures, poverty is on the rise.

And though its leaders and visiting aid experts never tire of expounding on its abundant promise and potential, Africa has been beset over the past three decades by repeated economic and social crises.

The results of structural adjustment – the ideology of economic management devised by the World Bank and often criticised by African leaders – have been modest and progress has fallen well short of expectations.

The poor, and particularly women and children, have been the first to suffer as governments have sought – often under extreme duress from the donor community – to live within their means.

Africa has been largely left

behind as countries in Asia and elsewhere have made better use of their resources and competed more effectively on the world market.

Africa’s countries include 22 of the 23 nations identified by the United Nations as having the lowest human development levels in the world, while 33 of the world’s 47 least developed countries are African.

Access to such basic services as health care and primary education in Africa remains lower than anywhere else, while population growth and infant mortality levels are higher. It is estimated that by the turn of the century one-third of the world’s poor will be living in the African continent.

So at a time when many countries continue to be torn apart by conflict – among them Burundi, Sudan, Somalia – the timing of this new UN endeavour is crucial.



Military manoeuvres: Women training yesterday with the Sudanese Popular Defense Force at Khawi, outside Khartoum. The militia – optional for women – provides troops to fight against the southern rebels. Photograph: AP

## Ethiopians edge back from brink of famine

For the first time the country is almost self-sufficient in food, writes David Orr

Addis Ababa – To many in the West, Ethiopia has become synonymous with the terrible famine of 1984-85, when nearly 1 million people died.

Though its sheer scale has earned it a special place in the annals of human suffering, the Eighties famine is by no means unique in Ethiopia’s recent history. In 1973 a drought in the same north-eastern region of the country resulted in the deaths of some 300,000 people.

Again, in 1994, food shortages in the Tigray and Wollo areas killed between 5,000 and 10,000 people.

There are those who believe starvation to be the intermittent but inevitable fate of this part of Africa. Simon Mechale, the man whose unenviable job it is to prevent another famine, is not one of them. But neither is he overly complacent about the future.

“This is the best year in our country for a long time,” Ethiopia’s Commissioner for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness, said. “We’ve had better rain, there’s peace and the government has been helping farmers with fertiliser and improved seeds. But this



Mengistu: Ruthlessly used food as a weapon of war

doesn’t mean there’s no problem. We still need food aid for 2.3 million people this year.”

Ethiopia is one of the most famine-prone countries on Earth. There is a food shortage here every year, a crisis about once a decade. With proper management it is usually possible – as it should be this year – to prevent people dying from starvation. But the threat of disaster is constant and it is likely that the country’s food aid needs will continue to grow rather than diminish.

“To a certain extent we have control over the human elements: what sort of government we have, whether there’s war or peace, whether we’re implementing the correct agricultural policies,” Mr Mechale, an economist with a degree from Bradford University, said. “But if the rain doesn’t come, there’s nothing we can do.”

Among the government’s disaster-prevention schemes is a plan to lessen the country’s dependence on rainfall by utilising rivers, which an official report has said could be harnessed to develop nearly 6 million acres through irrigation.

The underlying problem is that population growth is outstripping agricultural production and the land is simply not fertile enough to support a popu-

lation of 57 million people. Besides, the areas of maximum rainfall do not coincide with the areas of maximum population.

Almost half the inhabitants are judged by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to be under threat from famine.

“Simply put, people are living where they shouldn’t,” Allen Jones, WFP director in Ethiopia, said. “It rains more or less all year round in the west but most of the population is concentrated in the centre, the north and north-east.”

Yet relocation is not the solution it might appear. Around the time of the 1984-85 famine, the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, which fell in 1991, tried to shift whole communities from the beleaguered north and north-east.

It was a disaster: people and cattle used to the highlands fell victim to unfamiliar diseases in the lowlands. And there were outbreaks of ethnic unrest as hitherto unacquainted tribes were forced to compete for scarce resources.

The severity of the 1984-85 famine was exacerbated by the rigidly Marxist Mengistu regime and by its cynical use of food as a weapon of war. Food aid was withheld in an attempt to flush rebels out of their highland strongholds.

Five years of relative peace coupled with the reintroduction of a market economy by the government of Meles Zenawi have helped boost agricultural production. These factors, combined with the good rains of last year, have conspired to make the country, for the first time in recent memory, almost self-sufficient in food.

In the past decade or so Ethiopia needed about 600,000 tonnes of food aid a year. That amounts to an average spending of £80m a year on food aid. But the bulk of the 125,000 tonnes needed this year will be purchased in Ethiopia.

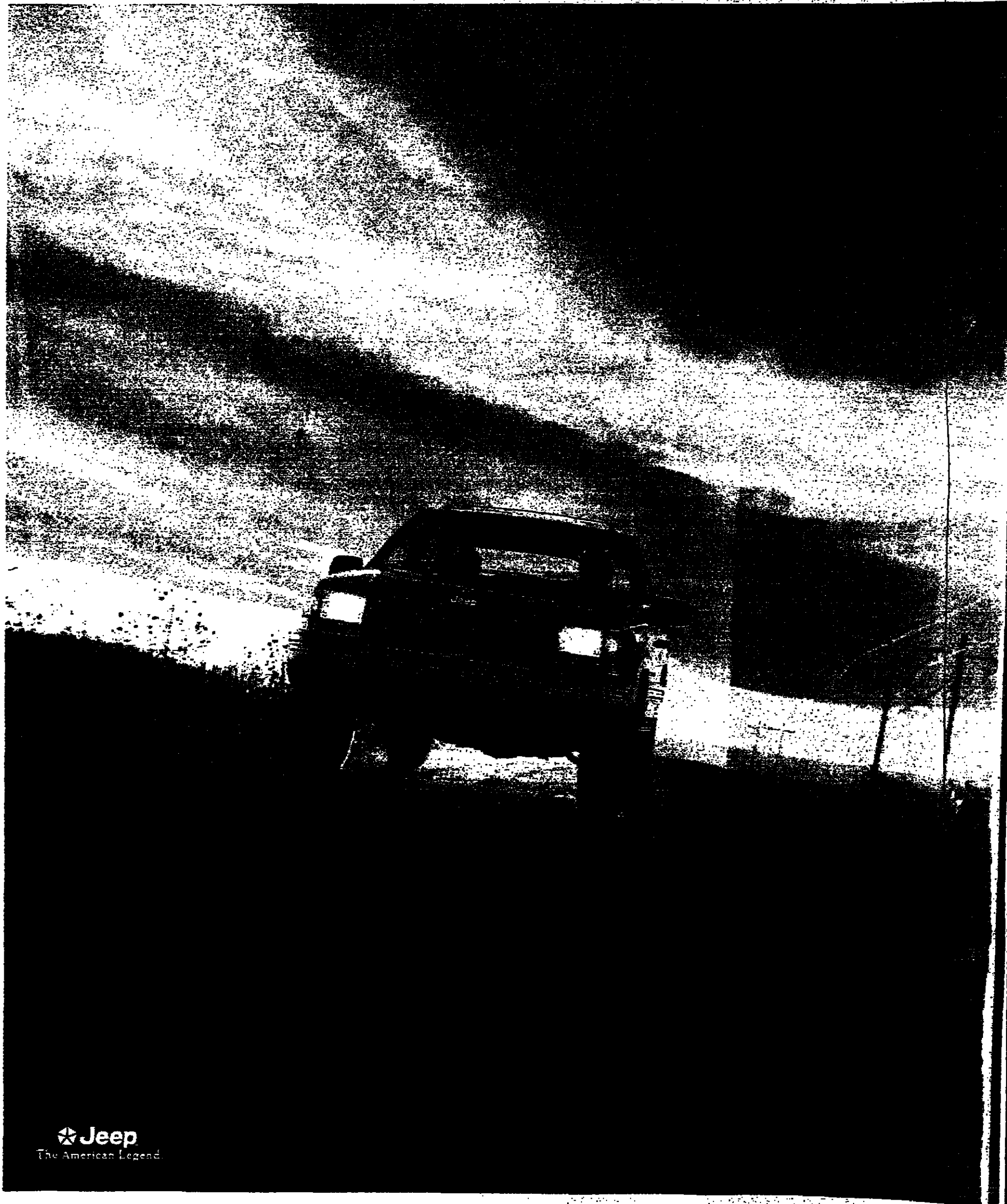
Yet Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries: per capita income is estimated at less than £75 per annum.

“Ethiopia is extremely vulnerable,” Mr Jones said. “In times of drought, the people don’t have enough cattle to sell to tide them over. A man can’t just go out and pawn his wife’s jewellery, because she hasn’t got any. People don’t have much access to jobs; the vast majority just scratch a living from the land.”

Nevertheless, there are signs that the situation is improving. The 1994 drought endangered just as many people as were affected a decade earlier, yet the death-toll was much lower.

The difference was that in 1994 the relief mechanisms were in place. The government, the UN and non-governmental organisations were able to act quickly, implementing a pre-agreed plan and drawing on massive food reserves at strategic locations.

This year for the first time the government is asking for aid to train people to look after the food needs of their own regions and to detect the early warning signs of food shortages.



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# Eight steps on the road to Las Vegas

When Frank Bruno steps into the ring against Mike Tyson in Las Vegas in the early hours of tomorrow morning it will be exactly 14 years since he made his professional debut. Nick Halling looks back on the key contests of his career

## Right hand starts renaissance

**March 17th 1982** British heavyweight boxing was in a moribund state 14 years ago. The little known Neville Meade was the reigning British champion, having won the title the year before against one Gordon Ferris. Meade would lose his title a year later to the equally obscure David Pearce.

However the division was set for a revival. In East London, the prospects of the Algerian-born Funso Banjo were being touted by his many supporters. The 32-year-old Joe Bugner was preparing for the third of many returns from inactivity. And Frank Bruno, in his first professional contest, was top of the bill at the Royal Albert Hall, already widely hailed as a potential world champion.

Bruno's potential had first come to light in 1980, when he won the Amateur Boxing Association heavyweight title. However, his professional career had almost run aground before it had taken off when Bruno's father's British Boxing Board of Control medical with an eye problem.

Terry Lawless, who had brought out Bruno's first manager, Burt McCarthy, paid for his being hopeful to have surgery in Colombia to repair a weakness in the peripheral vision in his right eye. The operation was a success and Bruno was granted a licence on his return to Britain.

His first opponent was the hapless Lupe Guerra, who subsided inside a round at the first sign of hostilities. Bruno had clearly been the beneficiary of the over-cautious matchmaking which would characterise much of his early career, but in retrospect, the right hand that ended Guerra's resistance marked the start of a domestic heavyweight renaissance.

## Well-timed punch reveals vulnerability

**Oct 11th 1983** Aided by the ever-watchful Lawless, Bruno had disposed of 18 carefully selected opponents in just 40 painfully one-sided rounds by the time he faced Floyd "Jumbo" Cummings at the Albert Hall. His world title aspirations appeared genuine, while his engaging personality meant he was on the way to supplanting Henry Cooper as the nation's favourite pugilist.

There seemed little to fear when the mouthy, confident Cummings swaggered into the ring. Cummings had recently boxed Joe Frazier to a draw, but the old champion was a pale imitation of the thrilling warrior of the Seventies.

However, Cummings was known to possess a clubbing left hook and when it landed flush to the side of Bruno's jaw at the end of round three the Londoner was in genuine distress. The shot landed as the bell sounded, which was just as well for Bruno, who stood transfixed, head bowed, unable to move or defend himself.

Lawless raced from the corner to guide his stricken charge back to the safety of his stool. The minute's rest was sufficient, because although Cummings launched wave upon wave of crude attacks, Bruno managed to survive, eventually halting the spent American in the seventh.

Bruno was afforded a standing ovation as he returned to his dressing-room: he had survived his first crisis, but Cummings had exposed a lack of mobility and, more pertinently, Bruno's vulnerability under the impact of a well-timed punch.

## Squeezed out by 'Bonecrusher'

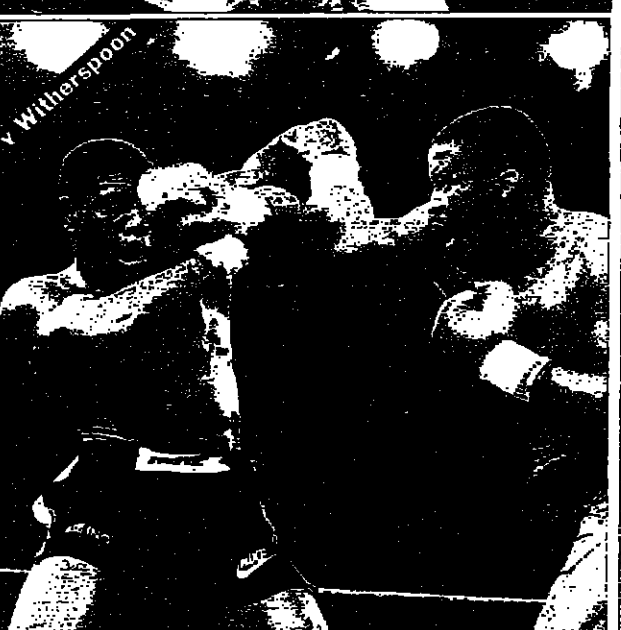
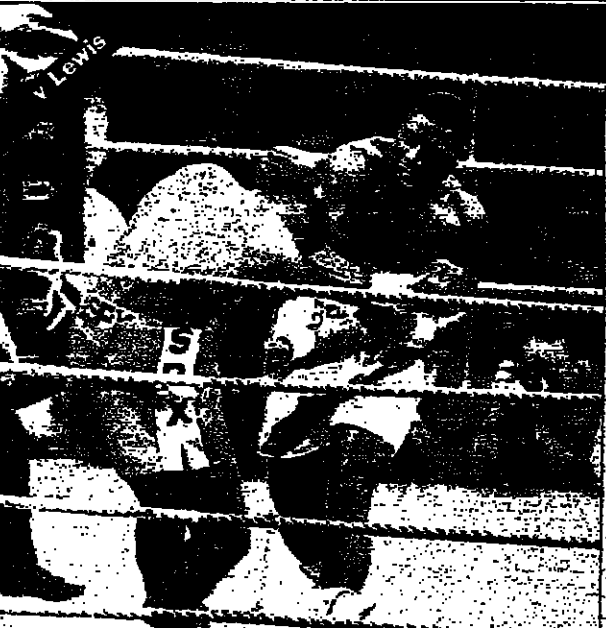
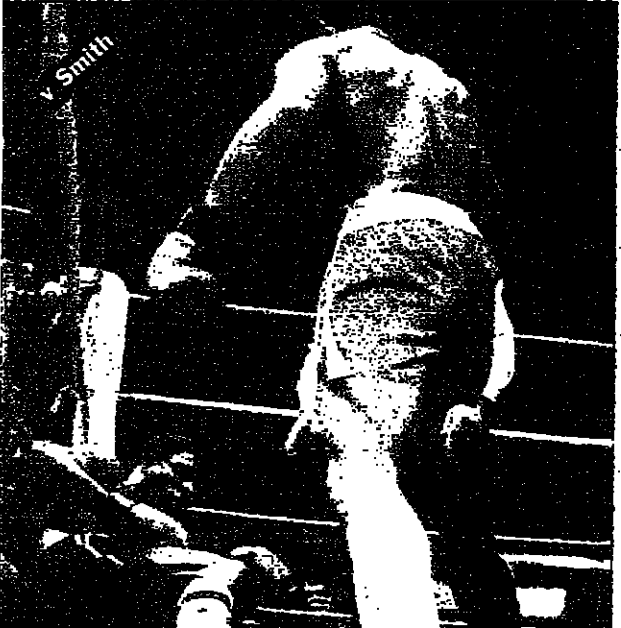
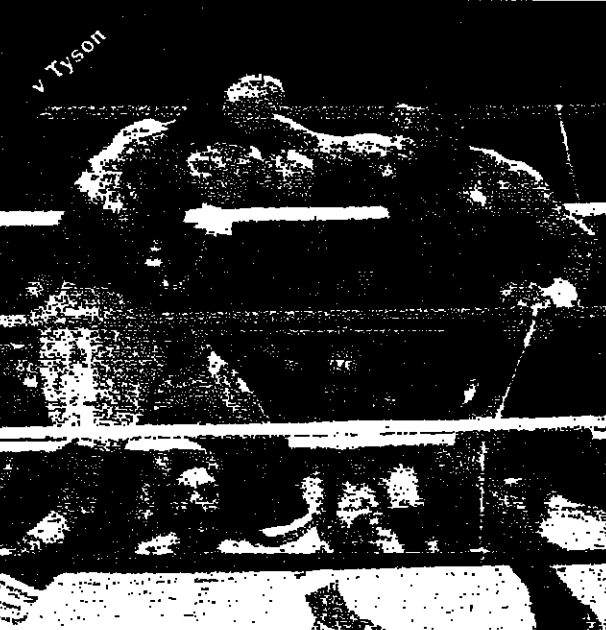
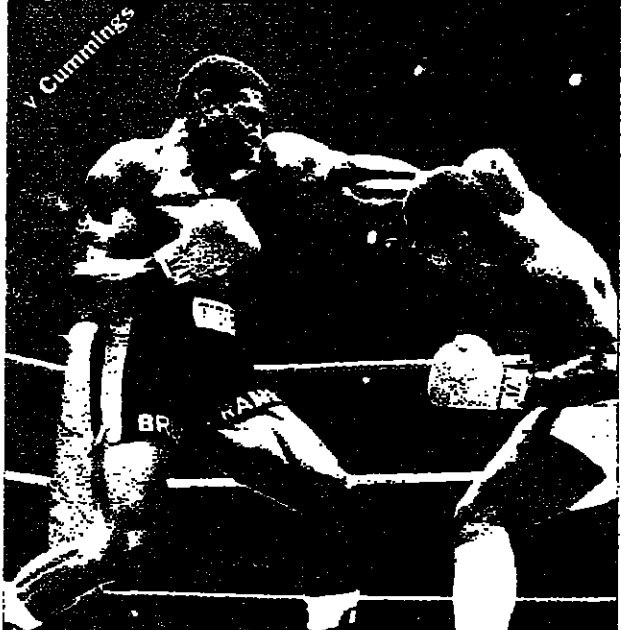
**May 13th 1984** Two more knock-out victories after the Cummings fight enabled Bruno to set up a contest with James "Bonecrusher" Smith, an unofficial eliminator for the world title held by Larry Holmes. Little was known of Smith in Britain, although his reputation across the Atlantic suggested a capable opponent who could both withstand and administer punishment.

For nine rounds the Londoner produced the best boxing of his career to open up an unassailable points lead. However, in the 10th and final round, Smith finally caught his man. As with Cummings, Bruno seemed incapable of comprehending what had happened, remaining upright as Smith unloaded. Lawless insists the American landed 27 unanswered punches before Bruno went down for the full count, his first loss in 22 contests.

After a brave challenge against Holmes, Smith would go on to win the World Boxing Association version of the title before taking Mike Tyson the distance. Bruno appeared too fragile to mix in such company.

## Witherspoon doles out punishment

**July 19th 1986** In the first of his four assaults on the world title, Bruno was matched with Tim Witherspoon, the reigning World Boxing Association champion. It seemed he had recovered from his beating against Smith, having won the European title (Bruno never fought for the British championship) and then



disposed of a former world champion, Gerrie Coetzee, inside of a round.

Witherspoon arrived at Wembley in dispute with his promoter, Don King, amid rumours that he was disillusioned with his profession. With the advantages of a home crowd and an uninterested opponent, the odds-makers favoured the Londoner.

For 10 rounds, Bruno looked a safe bet, picking off the man from Philadelphia with a stream of accurate jabs. But the Dan, however, Witherspoon seemed to tire of it all. A crashing right hand caught Bruno cold, the challenger eventually wilting in a neutral corner under a fearful barrage. Once again, Bruno's inability to cope in a crisis had found him out.

## Low point reached in absurd mismatch

**June 27th 1987** In some respects, this was the low point of Bruno's career. The Briton found himself matched against Chuck Gardner in a bizarre open-air promotion in Cannes. Bald, overweight and with no record to speak of, Gardner clearly did not belong in the same ring as a genuine contender.

If looked a misanthrope, it proved to be an embarrassment. Bruno disposed of his would-be rival inside a round. Criticism came from all sides, including the BBC, which had been a loyal camp follower from the beginning. Even the general public, for whom Bruno could do little wrong, were less than impressed.

## Champion shaken but not disturbed

**Feb 25th 1989** Bruno's second attempt at the world title saw him matched against the man he faces again in Las Vegas tonight. At the time Mike Tyson was the most feared fighter in the world and a man who looked certain to dominate the heavyweight division for years to come.

Tyson put his rival down inside the first few seconds, as the contest threatened to become an embarrassment. Bruno, however, composed himself and towards the end of the round landed a left hook which stopped the young champion in his tracks. Bruno hesitated, Tyson recovered and the moment was lost.

There was no questioning Bruno's bravery, but in the end the fight became a typically one-sided affair. Bruno sustained a thorough beating before being rescued by the referee in round five. For the only time in his career, he had been thoroughly out-classed.

## Lewis prevails in battle of Britons

**Oct 1st 1993** The Tyson fight proved to be Bruno's last under the stewardship of Terry Lawless. Bruno went into retirement for more than two years, while enjoying a new career in pantomime and the light entertainment industry.

When he emerged in 1991, self-managed, he signed a promotional deal with Mickey Duff which resulted in a third assault on the world crown. Boxing is a hype business, but there was nothing fake about the mutual dislike between Bruno and his fellow Briton, Lennox Lewis.

Before an open air crowd in Cardiff, Bruno gave a composed and competent account of himself for six rounds, before Lewis connected with a wild left hook in the seventh. Bruno's head and hands dropped, Lewis pressed home his advantage and Bruno was rescued by the referee. The weakness first exposed by "Jumbo" Cummings a decade earlier had thwarted him again.

## Fall of McCall finally ends the odyssey

**Sept 22nd 1995** Lewis would lose his title to Oliver McCall, an American heavyweight promoted by Don King. King's partner in Britain is Frank Warren, who had survived a shooting to return to promotional prominence. Ever the shrewd businessman, Bruno signed with Warren, confident the connection would lead to a match with McCall.

Warren also enjoys a relationship with British Sky Broadcasting, a significant factor given that the BBC had decided to terminate its interest in Bruno after a meaningless first-round defeat of Jesse Ferguson following the loss to Lewis.

Bruno was duly granted his wish and at an emotional Wembley stadium built up a healthy points lead. McCall ended the stronger, but unlike Smith, Witherspoon, Tyson and Lewis, failed to find a finish. After a career spanning 13 years, 44 contests and four title attempts, Bruno was a world heavyweight champion at last.

Photographs: Alamy, Emphas, PA, Daily Mail

### Quotes of the week

- I think that at any other ground in the country the goal would have been given. Matthew Le Tissier, the Southampton player, on Neil Shipperley's disallowed effort, against Manchester United in the FA Cup.
- I said to the players at half-time, make it more entertaining. Let Liverpool get three goals and we will all go home happy. Leeds' manager Howard Wilkinson's sarcastic response to criticism of his side's negative tactics against Liverpool in the FA Cup sixth round.
- I thought Martin [Brundle] was dead. David Coulthard on the crash at last Sunday's Australian Grand Prix.
- It hurts when people get the idea that I'm some kind of pantomime freak. Frank Bruno, who defends his world title against Mike Tyson today.
- Players lives cannot be put at risk for a game of cricket. I would not have wanted that on my conscience. Clive Lloyd, the former West Indies captain who called off the Sri Lanka v India World Cup semi-final following a riot.
- If he beats Mike Tyson, it's the equivalent of England winning the World Cup in 1966 without a doubt, the biggest thing for British sport. I can't think of a thing to mail it. Bruno's manager, Frank Warren.
- Someone needs their bottom soiled. The cloth is like an American carpet. It's too thick and is bringing down the standard of play. The world snooker champion, Stephen Hendry, criticises the playing tables at the Thailand Open.
- You can't stop boys going out with girls, particularly when they are single, but so as the other matters are concerned, any Manchester City player involved would have to go down the road. Francois Lee, the City chairman, after Nicky Sumner was at the centre of newspaper drugs and sex allegations.
- I need to know what the wicket is like, what batting is like and the number of overs left. Glenn Hodges, the Chelsea manager, uses a cricket analogy to sum up his position at Stamford Bridge.
- My beliefs are more important than anything. If I have to give up basketball, I will. This country has a long history of oppression. I don't think you can argue the facts. You can't be for God and for oppression. It's clear in the Koran, Islam is the only way. Abdul-Rauf, a devout Muslim and key member of the Denver Nuggets team, who refused to stand during the American national anthem at a recent NBA game.

## Hamed has big plans Clubs gamble on fight

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

Naseem Hamed is a man in a hurry as he prepares his first defence of the World Boxing Organisation featherweight title against Nigeria's Said Laual at the Scottish Exhibition Centre in Glasgow tonight.

A damaged right hand kept Hamed out of action for nearly six months after he took the title from Steve Robinson in Cardiff. Now the 22-year-old Sheffield showman, who says his hand is fine, aims to make up for lost time. He predicts victory in two rounds and has set himself an outrageous task of winning three more world titles before the end of the year.

Tom Johnson, the International Boxing Federation champion from the United States, is his first target. Mexico's WBO super-bantamweight holder, Marco Antonio Barrera is another. "The Prince is ready to take

over British boxing again. I can't wait to be back in the ring," Hamed said. "I'm so strong and fit, the weight is great and the buzz I'm getting is tremendous. I don't say things I can't achieve."

Hamed was at ringside in Newcastle a fortnight ago when Johnson survived an early knock-down to force a last-round stoppage for a 10th title win. "I wasn't impressed. He's getting a bit old and looks rather chippy," Hamed added. "I've been watching tapes of Barrera and he is probably the best in the two divisions. But if he comes in with his face, he's tailor-made for me. My power is not of super-bantam or feather, I'm punching harder than either of those two weights."

Hamed, going for his 21st successive win, dismisses Laual's chances on the basis of two blemishes on a 19-fight record. The 26-year-old Austrian-based challenger lost and drew with Freddy Cruz, who Hamed beat in six rounds in 1994.

"I gave Cruz such a beating that he couldn't wait to get out of the ring," Hamed said. "Laual is a bit further up than mediocre but has never boxed anyone of my standard. I've two rounds in my head and I'm sticking with that. It will be quick, so don't blink."

The only question mark concerns the hand. Is it really right? Doubts have been expressed in some quarters.

Joe Bugner will continue his 30-year career in Berlin tonight hoping to preserve his remote chance a re-match with Frank Bruno. The Australian-based Bugner, 46, challenges Britain's Scott Welch for the World Boxing Organisation inter-continental heavyweight title.

Four o'clock in the morning may be the time when spirits are at their lowest ebb, but a number – deliberately unspecified by BSkyB – of clubs and pubs around the country have gambled on the hope that Bruno-Tyson live will entice their customers.

The Sports Cafe, in the Haymarket, is offering two-tier entertainment on its 120 television screens – and without any wrangles over their licence, which runs until 6.00am. Upstairs, a black tie affair for 150, who will pay £60 a head for a champagne meal with all the trimmings; downstairs, at £20 each, an estimated 450 will secure themselves a view and four drinks. Pints of vodka all round.

Shoeless Joe's, the King's Road bar owned by the England

rugby union player Victor Uboqui, has been unable to gain a licence extension for a live showing, so its regulars will be turning up at the doors at 8.30am on Sunday with their hands over their ears in case anyone should tell them the result. A total of 200 people will pay £15 for an accompanying two-course champagne breakfast.

Rock City, in Nottingham, will offer around 1,500 regulars a live view, although only soft drinks will be served. The long hours before the fight will be filled with videos of boxing classics such as the "Thriller in Manila", and other offerings such as *Pulp Fiction* or *The Blues Brothers*. Choice will be determined by the loudest cheers.

Ruby Tuesdays, in Glasgow, will open specially on Sunday for a double header – a recording of the fight and a live view of the

Real Thing – Celtic v Rangers. Pubs have hit problems with extending licensing hours. "I am not aware of any pub that has got an extension for a live showing," said Tim Hanson, spokesman for the Brewers and Licence Retailers Association.

The route remains open, however, for private parties to be held. Carl Spies, landlord of The Tannery Arms, in Bishop's Cleeve, is inviting around 30 regulars, who have paid for drinks up front, to see the fight live. "It was a tricky decision from a business point of view, but Spies' background as a former amateur boxer in Tottenham tipped the balance. "I hope to break even," he said. "But I think Sky are taking the mick. I already pay £70 per month, and I've had to lay out another £120 just for one fight. If they try this again, I'm out."

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## FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP

## Captain Carling embarks on final voyage

STEVE BALE  
Rugby Union Correspondent

If elements among the Twickenham crowd have been equivocal about some of the rugby England have played this season, even the grumpiest curmudgeon among this afternoon's 75,000-strong host will scarcely forbear to cheer Will Carling when he stands for the last time at the helm against Ireland.

A nautical metaphor is appropriate for a season in which England, even though they can end it with a Triple Crown, have sailed through persistently turbulent waters. Jack Rowell, their manager, has been careful to say in his defence that he warned the Rugby Football Union it would be so, but he never thought it would be quite like this.

The question Rowell cannot

fairly answer, because he is a partial witness, is what constitutes a good season for England, the difficulty being that even when three-fifths of the team are first-season initiates the public expectation appears to be worse than ever. But however unreasonable, England - management and players - should take this as a compliment.

A decade ago such English progress towards a Triple Crown would have been greeted with a combination of ecstasy and incredulity. Now, as a result of the phenomenal success of the eight years of Carling's captaincy, it is merely par for the course. Grand Slams, three in the Nineties, have become so commonplace that they seem to be a requirement rather than an agreeable but optional extra.

The latter was how the Welsh viewed it in the Seventies,

however presumptuous aspects of their supporters' conduct may have been, and it is entirely possible if not probable that this post-World Cup period of rapid reconstruction will fit England for further post-Carling years of success. In that circumstance, the Triple Crown is an agreeable, but optional, extra.

"I thought if we lost at Murrayfield and beat Ireland this could have been a reasonable season; that's my genuine view on where this rebuilding season is," Rowell remarked. His intention is that England will never again be confronted with such a one-off turnover of players as has occurred this season.

"If we are going to blood new people in the team there should be one or two a year," he added. "This year there were six or seven, getting on for half a team that's new, and that's why I'm

ENGLAND v IRELAND	
at Twickenham	
M. Catt	15 S. Mason
J. Sleightholme	14 S. Geoghegan
W. Carling	13 M. Field
J. Guscott	12 J. Bell
R. Underwood	11 N. Woods
P. Grayson	10 D. Humphreys
M. Dawson	9 N. Hagan
G. Rowntree	8 N. Poplewell
M. Regan	7 A. Clarke
J. Leonard	6 P. Wallace
M. Johnson	5 G. Fletcher
G. Archer	4 D. Davidson
L. Dallaglio	3 D. Coryell
D. Richards	2 V. Costello
B. Clarke	1 M. McBride

Replacements: 16 J. Callard (Bath), 17 P. de Gier (Bath), 18 R. Bland (Oxford), 19 V. O'Brien (Bath), 20 G. Dwyer (Bath), 21 T. Rodger (Northampton), 22 R. Hogg (Northampton).  
Referee: E. Murray (Scotland).

very pleased with the way they've worked through the season. This should not be regarded as special pleading on England's behalf. With their gigantic player base they do not need or deserve any, and begging Ireland's pardon, however callow

England may be there is no logical reason to anticipate anything but a Triple Crown.

This is how the Irish prefer it, even if the relentless downplaying of their chances by their manager, Pat Whelan, has seemed over so slightly exaggerated. Man for man Ireland hardly compare but it was ever thus and England's great strength coming this season - and even, arguably, against Scotland - has been that the whole has been less than the sum of the parts.

So for Rowell this is a game that is best approached in trepidation, a mood not lightened when Mike Catt limped out of training yesterday with recurring groin strain before insisting he would be fit. "The first thing we have to do is subdue the Irish," he said. "No doubt they will come out against England feeling second favourites and feel-

ing they are going to do something about it. That's when they are very dangerous."

Carling and others among the seniors whose England careers are inevitably on the wane need no reminding of this. Two years ago presumption of English victory was as easy to make as it is now and only Geoghegan, it is now and only Geoghegan, it is now and only McBride, Field, Poplewell and McBride survive from the Irishmen who inflicted Carling's only Five Nations defeat at Twickenham.

But which Irish team will see today: the pale imitation who collapsed to a record defeat by France four weeks ago or the bantlers who dumped the Welsh on their return to Dublin? Curiously Murray Kidd, the New Zealander whose coaching contract is up for renewal after this match, said he derived encouragement from the Paris mismatch.

This, it has to be said, is the international language of coaching: eternal optimism coupled with eternal excuses. "I'll say again, whether we like it or not we are rebuilding this year," Rowell said. "We haven't imposed ourselves at Twickenham and the sooner we get back to it the better - which would add up to giving the captain an immense send-off, which he deserves." Aye aye, cap'n.

## Five Nations Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
1 Scotland	4	3	0	1	80	56	6
2 France	3	2	0	1	74	41	4
3 England	3	2	0	1	51	39	4
4 Ireland	3	1	0	2	50	78	2
5 Wales	3	0	3	4	67	0	0

Results: 20 Jan: France 15 England 12; Ireland 10 Scotland 16; 3 Feb: England 21 Wales 15; Scotland 19 France 14; 17 Feb: France 45 Ireland 10; Wales 14 Scotland 16; 2 March: Scotland 9 England 18; Ireland 30 Wales 17.

## Dallaglio grows into England job

When folk started speculating on Lawrence Dallaglio as England captain, there was no vacancy. Now there is - or will be once Will Carling has stepped down at the end of this afternoon's Triple Crown match against Ireland - and what's more Dallaglio already has the public support of one former England coach.

As Jack Rowell, the manager, dispensed with Dick Best's services, this could conceivably be less advantageous than Dallaglio might wish. But the simple fact that a dyed-in-the-wool Harlequin has been saying something nice about a Wasp suggests that he must be the best choice.

You would hardly expect the man himself to agree, not yet. This is not false modesty, just the realism that comes with an important match to come in which Dallaglio will win his sixth cap. And anyway, much to Dallaglio's frustration, the next England game and with it the next captaincy are not until November.

Will has made his decision and we all respect that but there is a lot of time for the captaincy strategy to be worked out," he said. "There's enough on my plate coming into the team without worrying about that but I suppose it's an interesting one as to whether it's good to have a club captain as England captain, because Will Carling never was."

This is a reminder that Dallaglio is captain of Wasps at an age, 23, that would seem tender were it not for memories revived in recent days that Carling himself was only 22 when he was appointed in 1988. But if Jack Rowell were minded to follow the example set by Geoff Cooke, 60 internationals ago, he would be bound to prefer Dallaglio to all the other captaincy candidates.

For one thing, his place in the England back row - even as an open-side flanker having to learn this new role - is assured. For another, he has shown himself to have a grasp of the exigencies of captaincy in the most testing of circumstances at his club. "It is an added responsibility but it is as much of a burden as you let it become," he said.

"I'd like to think I've played even better than I would have done but it did come a year early. In an ideal world I would like

Steve Bale talks to the forward tipped to take over the England captaincy

to have been pressing for the captaincy next season, but it was not a decision it took me long to make when it happened." Nor, of course, would it if the England job were to follow, though equally that would be earlier than he would have wished.

Dallaglio was pushed into leading his club last October when Wasps decided they could no longer tolerate the subversive influence of Rob Andrew and Dean Ryan, the former captain and captain who had signed away their allegiance to New-

Dallaglio is an immense player; hard mentally, hard physically, very constructive. He has leadership

castle. At the time, Dallaglio was not capped, nor was he playing at open side. Both have subsequently changed.

Greatly for the better, one might add. Dallaglio, 6ft 4in and 16st, joined Wasps after a distinguished junior career at No 8 but, owing to Ryan's substantial presence in that position, had to make do at blind side. All the while Rowell was looking for an open side and at the start of the season the manager made clear that, post-World Cup, his back-row policy was about to change.

For the South Africa match in November, Andy Robinson was recalled when what Rowell ideally wanted was not only Robinson's speed but also the extra power that goes with extra stature. He found it in Dallaglio, whose cameo performance against the Springboks - as a replacement blind side - was enough to persuade Rowell to persuade Dallaglio

that he must persuade Wasps to make him their open side.

So it has transpired. Even now Dallaglio has played no more than a dozen games in his England position but they have been enough to persuade the manager that he has seen a future that works. "He is an immense player, hard mentally, hard physically, very constructive," Rowell said. "He is the fastest forward we have. He is going increasingly to make an impact in games. He has leadership capabilities."

Coming from such a quarter, this is outright acclamation. Rowell took him on the England tour to South Africa in 1994 - "as an investment", as the manager likes to put it - but Dallaglio failed to make last year's World Cup squad and can be excused a frustration which he says was dispelled as soon as the tournament was over. "In hindsight, I can see why they should have gone for people with more experience than me."

At the time I was 22, so I was able to reflect that there would be plenty more World Cups to go for. If I'd been 28 and it had been a last-chance I would have been bitterly disappointed, but I had the patience to carry on and tell myself my time would come."

Dallaglio's fleeting appearance against the Springboks four months ago has been followed by first-choice selection throughout the season. His progression seems to have been smooth and easy but has been anything but. "The danger is I'm learning at international level which is more difficult because the room for mistakes is so slim."

"You have to be very careful, because you're learning in an arena that is very public and people ask questions of you. That's been quite a serious challenge. But I believe I have the ability and the necessary qualities to play there and I feel I'm improving with every game."

"Of course there are some things smaller players can do more readily but as long as the tall player can get the right body angles there's no reason why he should be at too much of a disadvantage. Everyone, no matter what shape and size, obviously has certain qualities but the answer is that you pick the guy with



Taking the strain: Lawrence Dallaglio training yesterday. Photograph: David Ashdown

the greatest all-round ability." Implicitly if not explicitly, Dallaglio means himself and England are already accumulating handsomely from the investment Rowell made in South Africa in 1994. Lucky England - there was a time when this Londoner considered throwing in his lot with Italy, land of his Turinese father and indeed of himself, since he holds an Italian as well as a British passport.

When the teenaged Lawrence played for England Colts against Italy at Cambridge

in 1991 his surname intrigued the visitors sufficiently for him to be invited to Milan and offered a lucrative contract to play alongside David Campe and under the coaching of another great Australian, Mark Ella.

"The idea was to live out there, study at the university and play for Milan with a view to playing for Italy," he said. "If I had done, I would possibly have been capped at 21 instead of 23, but the way things have transpired it's worked in my favour. I've never regretted my

decision to come back: I was never in any doubt that it was England I really wanted."

Instead of Milan, his studies have taken place at Kingston University in Surrey where he is in the final year of a degree course in urban estate management but, as Dallaglio is the prototype of a modern rugby professional, we should not expect him to manage too many urban estates once he has qualified. When our interview concluded he was off to see his agent. See what I mean?

## Wales' destiny rests on French style

TIM GLOVER  
reports from Cardiff

Wales' only chance of avoiding another whitewash at the Arms Park today is if France, who rarely travel as well as their wines, are in two minds as to how victory should be achieved. So far this season they have displayed a variety of styles, not all of them fashionable.

France began the year as Five Nations favourites and should, deservedly, win the championship. They beat England by taking on the English forwards, especially in the line-out, and seemed to travel to Murrayfield without a care in the world.

Scotland stunned a complacent, sluggish France with their speed and élan after which the French made their customary use of the guillotine. By the time Ireland travelled to Paris, France had settled on a decent half-back

pairing of Guy Acocheberry and Thomas Castaignède and the Irish were out to pieces.

France scored seven tries, a statistic which should secure them the championship ahead of England and Scotland, and the introduction of the young centre Stéphane Glas for the injured Thierry Lacroix gave them an extra cutting edge.

The sight of breaking Glas exposed a woeful Irish midfield defence. Five years ago the 22-year-old student from Bourgoin suffered from a malformation of his spinal column and was advised to give up the game. He took up body building and athletics before returning to rugby.

"This seems like an impossible dream," he said. "I didn't expect to play for France and now I'm being compared to some of our great players."

In Paris he has been compared, somewhat prematurely, to Philippe Sella. Having gone

WALES v FRANCE	
at Cardiff Arms Park	
J. Thomas	15 J. Llanelli
I. Evans	14 E. Marmont
J. Davies	13 S. Gips
N. Davies	12 O. Campan
G. Thomas	11 P. Saint-André
M. Jenkins	10 T. Castaignède
R. Hovley	9 C. Acocheberry
G. Loader	8 C. Caffiano
J. Humphreys	7 J. M. González
J. Davies	6 F. Toernaire
G. O. Llewellyn	5 A. Senechal
D. Jones	4 O. Roumat
E. Lewis	3 R. Castel
H. Taylor	2 S. Dispagne
G. Jones	1 L. Cabañes

Replacements: 16 W. Proctor (Llanelli), 17 A. Thomas (Llanelli), 18 A. Moore (Cardiff), 19 S. Williams (Cardiff), 20 L. Henson (Cardiff), 21 G. Jenkins (Cardiff).  
Referee: B. Sling (Ireland).

open, rugby has developed the sort of grapevine long familiar in association football and the vine is currently travelling on Eurostar between Paris and London. Sella's move to Sar-

The French were slicker and more polished in everything they did, winning the cleaner possession and mauling with devastating effect. In second row Laurent Bonventre - a dead ringer for Oliver Merle - they had the man of the match, and he was superbly supported

by the flanker Christophe Moni and Laurent Mazas at outside-half.

First-half tries from Yann Delagade, Thierry Labrousse and Stéphane Venditti as good as ended it is a contest with David Berty adding another with the last move of the match.

Wales managed just a penalty try, awarded for the French persistently not retreating at a tapped penalty, and a conversion and two penalty goals from Shaun Connor.

Wales At: Try Penalty try, Conversion Connor; Penalties Connor; France At: Tries De-laigade, Labrousse, Venditti, Berty; Conversions Mazas; Penalties Mazas.

Wales At: R. Jones (Cardiff), S. Hili (Cardiff), M. Taylor (Swansea), J. Purnell (Neath), G. Evans (Llanelli), S. Connor (Aberystwyth), J. Jones (Pontypool), C. A. Lewis (Cardiff), B. Williams (Neath), S. John (Llanelli), M. Viole (Neath), P. Arnold (Swansea), A. Gable (Newport), M. Workman (Newport), V. Davies (Cardiff).

France At: S. Venditti, M. Mariani, G. Pailhe, V. Delagade, D. Berty, L. Mazas, P. Carboneau, S. Soulet, D. Azam, J. Jorasse, H. Merle, L. Bonventre, C. Moni, J. Labrousse, L. Lopez.  
Referee: A. Lewis (Ireland).

	13
Wales A	34
France A	

France overwhelmed Wales with marvellous performance in the A international at Rodney

## Bravura juniors show seniors how to attack

England A 56  
Ireland A 26

In case the watching England players were in any doubt on the eve of today's Triple Crown match, their second string demonstrated that it is possible to begin, continue and end by playing all-out attacking rugby in yesterday's bravura performance at Richmond. writes Steve Bale.

The Athletic Ground was bulging with more than 6,000 spectators to see if the Irish could achieve their own A-level Triple Crown, but instead it was Anthony Diprose's team who thrillingly rampaged to their own five-match Grand Slam done at a points average of just over 40.

Yesterday there were seven tries - another useful reminder for the attendant seniors - but more important was that so many of this A-team, not least Diprose, showed themselves to have such significant international potential. With his ability to make a game coalesce around him, the captain could well be the forward-in-waiting to fill Dean Richards's motherhen role for England.

Diprose thoroughly deserved his try, England's sixth, but the game was more of a personal benefit for the student outside half Alex King with his 26 points. Piled with possession by a dominant pack, he and Andy Gornall played at half-back with the very authority for which Jack Rowell has been crying out at senior level.

Ireland's contribution of four tries was a tribute to their re-

silence as well as a keen eye for counter-attack which produced glorious, long-range scores by Conor O'Shea and Richard Wallace. Wallace later added a second and Neil Francis concluded proceedings by galloping 30 yards.

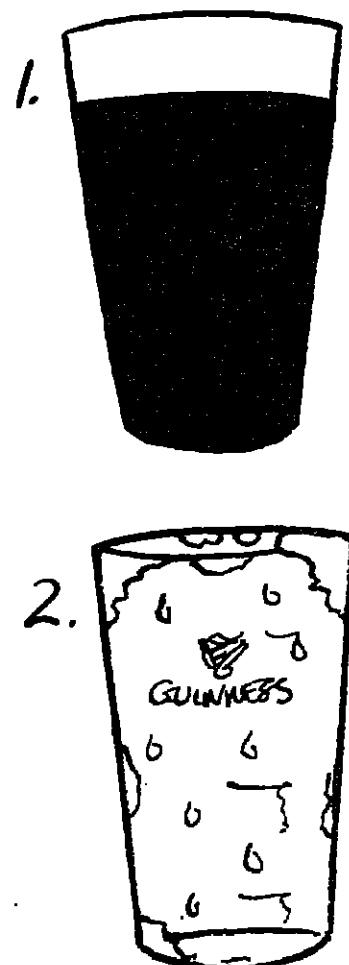
But if anything, their defeat could have been worse and it was impressive to witness an England side containing only one full international, Paul Hull (three caps), so comfortably subduing opponents whose seven capped players including such old hands as Francis, Eric Elwood and Wallace, the latter a Lions wing.

England have long since given up picking people of such vintage for such a fixture, a policy that is reaping a rich reward in the developmental terms Rowell keeps going on about. The senior team's manager particularly enjoyed the gadabout performances of the prop Darren Garforth with his two tries. Likewise Tim Simpson, Adedayo Adebayo and the superbly dynamic duo of Gornall and King.

England At: Tries Garforth 2, Gornall 1, Adebayo, Simpson, King, Diprose; Conversions King 6; Penalties King 2; Drop goal King; Ireland At: Tries Wallace 2, O'Shea, Francis; Penalties Elwood 2.

ENGLAND At: T. Simpson (West Hartlepool), P. Hull (Bristol), W. Greenwood (Harlequins), N. Greenwood (Wasps), A. Adebayo (Bath), A. King (Bristol University), A. Gornall (Wasps), R. Harte (Coventry), R. Cochrane, D. Garforth (Leicester), C. Murphy (West Hartlepool), D. Sims (Gloucester), M. Carr (Bristol), A. Diprose (Leicester), C. R. Jenkins (Harlequins).

IRELAND At: C. O'Shea (London Irish), R. Wallace (Gloucester), R. Harte (Coventry), S. McCraith (Sunderland), J. Topping (Bath), E. Elwood (Leicester), A. Francis (Leicester), P. Francis, S. Byrne (Blackpool), A. McKee (Leicester), M. O'Kelly (St. Mary's College), N. Francis (Old Bedford), A. Foley (Swansea), R. Wallace (London Irish), L. Holland (Old Crescent).  
Referee: G. Garvey (Canada).



How's that for an Irish conversion?

PURE GENIUS.



# SPORT

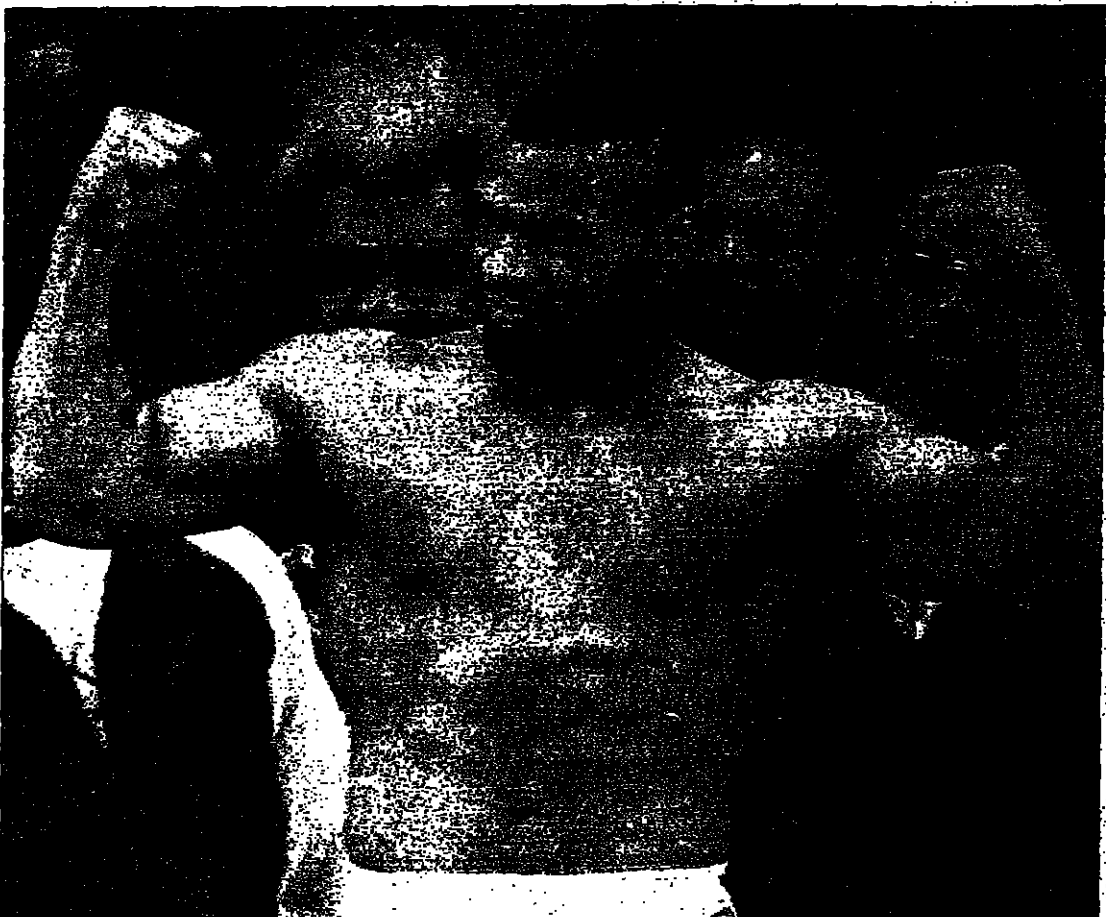


## FIVE NATIONS FINALE

Can England deliver in Carling's last game in charge? Page 31

WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP: British title holder ready to exploit any decline in past master's powers

# Bruno's confidence gains support



Measuring up: Frank Bruno (left) and Mike Tyson at yesterday's weigh-in for their World Boxing Council heavyweight title fight in Las Vegas

Photographs: Reuter

KEN JONES

reports from Las Vegas

Leaving the stage after weighing in for the defence of his World Boxing Council heavyweight championship against Mike Tyson tonight in Las Vegas, towering above the odds-on challenger, Frank Bruno paused to acknowledge the support of a large British contingent.

In response to the shouts of a raucous bunch who had been behaving boorishly in the manner of inebriated football supporters, booing Tyson's appearance on the scales, Bruno raised his right forefinger.

The chief change in Tyson since his release from prison last year is that he no longer looks intimidatingly confident. In the opinion of most he will defeat Bruno and is a clear favourite in the betting, but doubts linger.

They spring from thoughts of the challenger's claimed spiritual awakening, his uncharacteristic frustration. "I try to do my best but I always fall short of the mark," he said this week.

A factor vital to the initial spectacular phase of Tyson's career was the conviction that nobody could withstand his grim purpose, his refined ferocity. Opponents trembled visibly in his presence, beaten before they entered the ring.

But the effect of widely reported personal upheavals were evident suddenly in flawed timing and general puzzlement. That night a more accomplished fighter than Bruno, who was stopped in five rounds, might have beaten him.

A sensational loss to the unbeatable James "Buster" Douglas in Tokyo 12 months later confirmed suspicions that Tyson was on a downward spiral. "I wasn't aware of the pressure," he would say, "and it caught up with me."

The dozen of boxing trainers, 83-year-old Eddie Futch, who has had more than 20 world champions, including Joe Frazier, and now works with Riddick Bowe, disputes utterly the idea that Tyson can again become an irresistible force in the heavyweight division. "It simply isn't possible," he said this week. "We're talking about a guy who

## Bruno v Tyson

	Age	29
Weight	17st 9lb	15st 10lb
Height	6ft 3in	5ft 11 1/2in
Reach	82in	72in
Chest	47in	43in
Expanded	52in	45in
Forearm	17in	16in
Thigh	14in	14in
Wrist	24in	24in
Thigh	23 1/2in	27in
Calf	10in	9in
Heel	18 1/2in	16 1/2in
Wrist	10in	8in
Flat	14in	13in
Ankle	14in	11in
Flights	44	44
Workout	40/4	42/1
Stomping	38	37
Stomping	13	13
Stomping	13	13
World titles	10/1	10/1

was locked up for a long period and didn't fight for almost four years. That's an awful long time in the life of a fighter."

Futch is unimpressed by reports of Tyson's successes in sparring. "The gym and the

ring are different places," he said. "Fighters wear a headguard in the gym and the gloves are heavier. They don't feel the full impact of punches so it can be a place of false impressions."

Tyson takes a good shot but a renewal of the experience could come as a terrible shock. "I think so," Futch added, "but it's not as important as obvious flaws in timing. You couldn't learn very much from the couple of minutes Tyson was in with Peter McNeeley but quite a lot when he then fought 'Buster' Mathis. The fact that Tyson missed with so many punches suggests that his reflexes are nothing like what they were when he was unquestionably the most devastating hitter since Joe Louis."

In boxing, sharp reflexes are as important to defence as they are to the pressing home of attacks, particularly in Tyson's

case because he is usually at a disadvantage in reach. It was the way Tyson moved his head when coming forward, the disconcerting roll of powerful shoulders that made him so difficult to hit. "He doesn't appear to be as successful with that anymore and I think it's all to do with dulled reflexes," Futch said.

Shortly before attending a dinner held in New York this week that coincided with the 25th anniversary of an epic contest between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, the veteran trainer spoke with Bruno and was impressed by his confidence. "Bruno led me to believe that he can beat Tyson," he said this week at his home in Las Vegas.

It is not simply that Futch sees more self-esteem in Bruno. "The fact of being champion will have improved his confidence. He's a big guy with a powerful jab and showed against Oliver

McCall that he has learned how to hold and hang on in a crisis."

The prediction here is that a crisis will come quickly. The idea of pacing a fight has never appealed to Tyson. A favourite expression is that he is full of bad intentions.

Some recent events have put a strain on the process but logic suggests that Tyson will send Bruno into history before the scheduled 12 rounds are completed. Whatever chance the British hero has of victory rests with how well he performs in the early rounds, how he copes with the barrage of hooks and uppercuts Tyson is sure to unleash from the opening bell. "I've never known Frank be so full of himself before a fight and he's going to cause a great shock, end one of the most famous careers in boxing because when he gets through with this there will be nowhere for Tyson to go," Bruno's trainer, George Francis, said.

Upon being acquainted with this bellicose statement Tyson's chief advisor, John Horne and Rory Holloway, wore expressions of amusement. "It's all over for the champion," Holloway said. On the basis that Tyson may not be what he was but Bruno probably is, I find it impossible to make a case for the popular challenger. The forecast is Tyson in five, maybe earlier.

## British boxing punters prove patriotic

Around 95 per cent of British punters betting on tomorrow's World Boxing Council heavyweight fight in Las Vegas are backing Frank Bruno to successfully defend his title against Mike Tyson. These betters are backing their patriotism with money as William Hill anticipate record takings.

The company have taken several big-money bets, including one of £50,000 for Tyson, but the vast majority are for up to £100 and are going on Bruno.

Hills make Tyson 1-5 favourite with Bruno at 10-3, while rival company Ladbrokes currently have Bruno the 3-1

underdog with Tyson quoted at 2-9 to repeat his victory from the pair's first encounter.

Jan Wassell, of Ladbrokes said: "Frank is as popular in the betting shops as he is with the British public at large. We've taken bets of up to £2,000 on Bruno and many thousands of £5 and £10 flutters.

"This is building up into the busiest betting fight ever and we expect over £10m to be wagered across the betting industry. The previous record was for Tyson-Bruno I."

Ladbrokes are refusing to quote odds on Naseem Hamed retaining his World Boxing Organisation featherweight

title tonight in Glasgow. "Naseem is so good the odds we would offer would make it impossible for people to win money on him in a betting shop because of the betting tax," Wassell explained.

Hamed's opponent, Said Lawal, of Nigeria, is quoted at 14-1 to win.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2926, Saturday 16 March By Mass

ACROSS

- Suitable place for house parties? (10)
- Those with convictions in press or in novel form (9)
- Thanks - flute's playing is aesthetic (8)
- Engross and split first of teners (5)
- Expose Northern character in old city? (7)
- Name all characters in vault getting rap! (10)
- Striker hits upright (6)
- Feel sore taken in by salesman's displays (10)
- Salt's at home in a shanty (9)
- Set off for college in time (8)
- Nutty dessert is hot (7)
- Thwart one from SE Europe (6)
- Fools set up, including English mug (5)
- Drink excited right away (4)

DOWN

- Decoration obtained by PCs in a spot? (9)
- Right! Left! - What a fight! (4)
- Flute's playing is aesthetic (8)
- Engross and split first of teners (5)
- Expose Northern character in old city? (7)
- Name all characters in vault getting rap! (10)
- Striker hits upright (6)
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- Fools set up, including English mug (5)
- Drink excited right away (4)

Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the Larousse Dictionary of Literary Characters. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: Wendy Miles, Suzanne Mary Lewis, Bristol; J. Kennedy, Kent; George Howe, Cardiff; Victor Vines, Hammerside.

## Megson angry at double sale

Football

GUY HODGSON

Robert Chase's ability to lose staff could become apparent again next week after Norwich City's manager, Gary Megson, strongly criticised the club for selling Ashley Ward and Jon Newsome. He did not say he was leaving but, after his comments, that might have been superfluous.

Newsome joined Sheffield Wednesday for £1.5m yesterday while Ward, Norwich's top scorer, signed for First Division leaders Derby, after the two clubs agreed a £1m fee. However, Megson, their fourth manager in two years, was left "frazzled and furious" by the transfers.

"I didn't sanction the moves and I am not party to either transfer," he said. "Every team below us is doing its utmost to ensure its survival. The team and I are getting no help from the boardroom and we don't expect them to be a hindrance. The last person out of the 32 professionals I would ever recommend us to sell is Ashley Ward."

Chase, who has been under pressure from fans to quit the club since before last season's

## Llewellyn move blocked by WRU

Rugby Union

ROBERT COLE

The Welsh Rugby Union yesterday threw out Wales lock Gareth Llewellyn's request to transfer from Neath to Harlequins, and was immediately told it will almost certainly face a legal challenge from the London club.

Llewellyn has signed to join Quins next season but the WRU maintains he was not resident in England on 1 March and therefore does not meet the International Rugby Football Board residency qualifications for players seeking to play under a different Union.

It means Vernon Pugh and his committee could soon find themselves fighting on two legal fronts, as their senior clubs have already threatened to sue their governing body in their protracted battle over European Cup funding and next season's domestic programme.

While Llewellyn was restricting himself to a diplomatic "I am preparing for a very important international, I will comment next week," the WRU can brace themselves for a major test-case battle.

The WRU stresses it is merely sticking to the IRFB regulations, though it did add the rider that "the decision was taken with the aim of preserving the strength of domestic Welsh rugby."

Tony Hallett, the RFU secretary, said: "The RFU will stand by Harlequins. The RFU's position is that it is mindful of international board regulations, but it is equally mindful of the Treaty of Rome and restraint of trade, which has the greater authority. It has to be the law."

Dick Best, Harlequins' director of rugby, said: "If necessary, we will issue a writ against the Welsh Rugby Union. We envisaged something like this would happen."

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## It's not just Bruno that should be alarmed.

DON'T MISS THE FIGHT. BOOK A WAKE UP CALL ON 0800 800 835.

To use BT's reminder call, you have to have a phone with \* and # buttons on a single exchange line connected to a digital exchange. To find out if you are on a digital exchange (over 85% of the UK is) and for further information on how to set up a reminder call, please call freephone 0800 800 835. Reminder call is a pay per use service, and a charge of 12p inc vat will be added to your telephone bill for each reminder call you receive prior to April 1st 1996.

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